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ABSTRACT

This text asks students to analyze the mix of interests and values that have drawn the U.S. into the Middle East. High school students are to consider the principles and assumptions driving the expanded presence of the U.S. into the Middle East. Part 1 surveys the history of U.S. involvement in the Middle East up to the Persian Gulf War. Part 2 examines how the U.S. policy agenda in the region has changed in the wake of the Persian Gulf War. Four options are delineated for U.S. foreign policy for the Middle East. Students then apply their own recommendations for U.S. policy to three hypothetical regional crises. A list of suggested readings is included. The teaching unit contains a day-by-day lesson plan and student activities. The unit opens with a study of U.S. policy during the final weeks of the Shah's rule over Iran. The second day of the lesson plan calls on students to assume the roles of key Middle Eastern leaders in evaluating the U.S. impact on the Middle East. The third and fourth days engage students in a role play in which they act as advocates for any of four options for U.S. foreign policy for the Middle East. In the final day's lesson, students are asked to apply their own recommendations for U.S. policy to three hypothetical regional crises. Readings and study guides are included in this 5-day unit. (EH)

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Shifting Sands: Balancing U.S. Interests in the Middle East

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PUBLIC POLICY DEBATE IN THE CLASSROOM

Choices for the 21st Century Education Project

A program of the Thomas J. Watson Jr. Institute for International Studies

Brown University

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Shifting Sands: Balancing U.S. Interests in the Middle East is part of a continuing series on public policy issues. New units are published each academic year, and all units are updated regularly.

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The Choices for the 21st Century Education Project develops curricula on current and historical international issues and offers workshops, institutes, and in-service programs for high school teachers. Course materials place special emphasis on the importance of educating students in their participatory role as citizens.

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Thomas J. Biersteker
Director

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The Choices for the 21st Century Education Project is a program of the Thomas J. Watson Jr. Institute for International Studies at Brown University. Choices was established to help citizens think constructively about foreign policy issues, to improve participatory citizenship skills, and to encourage public judgment on policy priorities.

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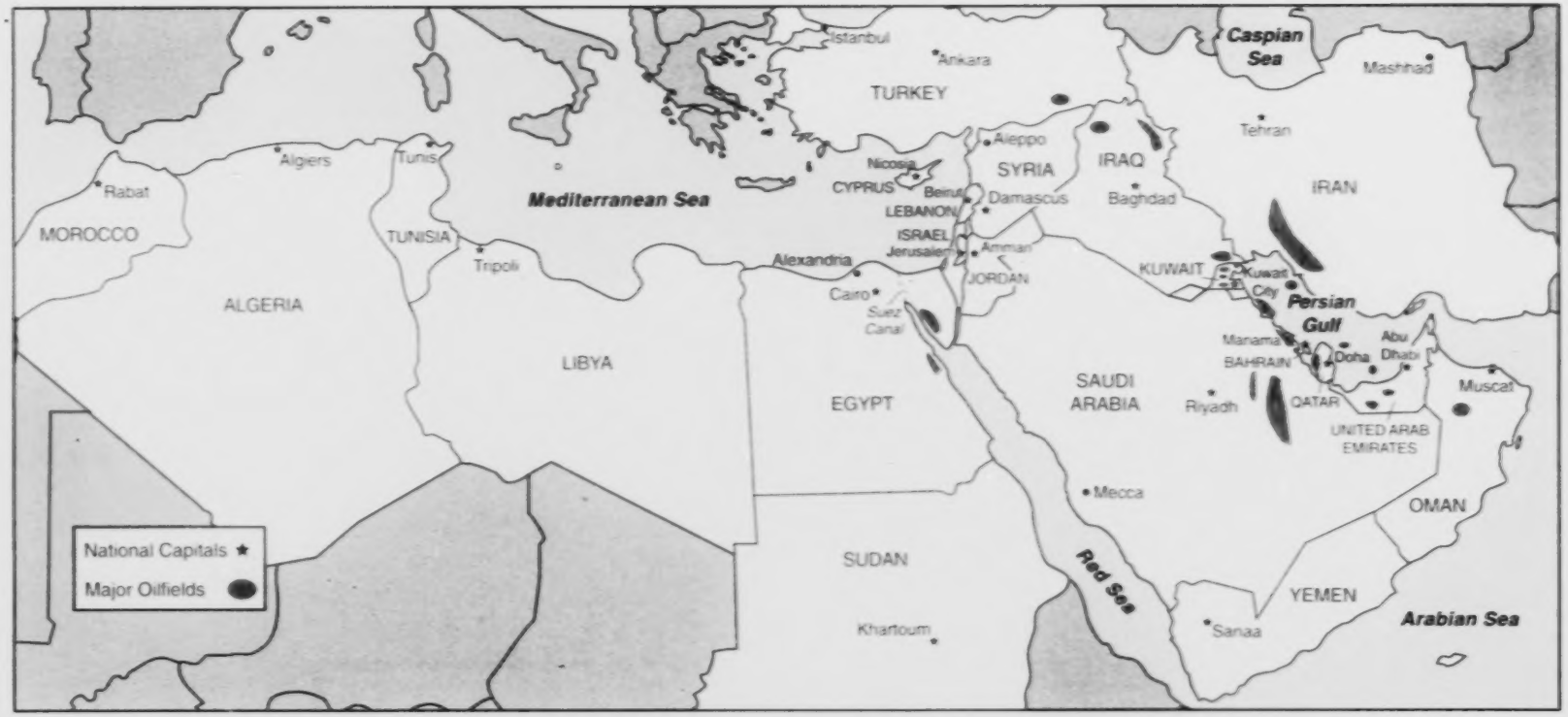
The Middle East



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Part I: America's Role in the Middle East

The U.S. Air Force's Prince Sultan Air Base lies deep in the barren desert of Saudi Arabia. Little more than half a century ago, the area knew only infrequent camel caravans. Today, it is marked by a 15,000-foot runway and barracks that house more than 4,000 American troops. Beyond the base's outer ring, a security perimeter extends a quarter mile into the desert. Guard units equipped with the latest night-vision technology track movements around the clock in the empty stretches of sand.

By any measure, the Prince Sultan Air Base is a remarkable feat of American engineering and ingenuity. At the same time, it raises serious questions about our country's involvement in a part of the world that increasingly dominates U.S. foreign policy.

The air base is designed to protect U.S. interests in the region known as the Middle East. In a crisis, U.S. pilots are positioned to provide air support for the more than 15,000 American troops stationed nearby. They are a few minutes flying time from the Persian Gulf — the center of the world's oil industry. Veering toward the north, U.S. pilots are within easy reach of Iraq and Iran, two countries that American leaders have identified as enemies of the United States. A few hundred miles to the west and U.S. warplanes are over Israel, a long-time ally of the United States and the flashpoint of four wars since 1948.

In 1991, 100 U.S. warplanes from the facilities at Prince Sultan took part in the huge multinational effort that defeated Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein in the Persian Gulf War. In 1996, the air base was expanded after a suicide bombing attack on another U.S. installation in Saudi Arabia claimed the lives of nineteen American soldiers.

America's growing commitment in the Middle East is at odds with the overall direction of U.S. foreign policy. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union at the end of 1991, the United States has been scaling back its international role. Without the pressure to contain Soviet communism, the U.S. defense budget has been cut. American troops have been withdrawn from overseas bases in Western Europe and elsewhere. Foreign aid spending in most parts of the world has been slashed. U.S. leaders — in step with the mood of the American public — have largely turned their attention to problems at home.

Two events help explain why the U.S. role in the Middle East has run counter to the trends of the 1990s.

First, the Persian Gulf War placed the United States at the center of the balance of power in the Middle East. In leading a coalition of twenty-eight nations, the United States succeeded in driving Iraq's invasion force out of Kuwait. Nonetheless, Iraq's Saddam Hussein held on to power and has continued to defy the international community. The more than 4,000 U.S. troops at the Prince Sultan Air Base are there primarily because of the threat from Saddam.

Second, Israel and its Arab neighbors have taken the first steps toward achieving a peaceful settlement of their long conflict. Again, the initiative came from the United States. Since 1991, the United States has sponsored a series of peace talks. As a result, breakthrough agreements have been signed between Israel and the Palestinians, as well as between Israel and Jordan. The peace process, however, remains fragile, with all sides looking to the United States for leadership.

Your assignment

In this unit, you will be called on to take part in the debate regarding U.S. policy in the Middle East. Like U.S. policymakers, you will find that the experiences of the recent past do not necessarily apply to the present. During America's four decades of confrontation with the Soviet Union, a solid majority of Americans agreed that containing communism was vital to protecting U.S. interests and values. The Middle East was one of several regions of the world in which Americans and Soviets competed for power and influence.

Now that the Soviet Union is gone, the United States has greater influence than ever in the Middle East. What is lacking, however, is a broad public consensus defining our country's goals in the region.

You will be confronted with the same questions facing U.S. policymakers: Which interests and values should undergird America's position in the region?

How should the Middle East's enormous oil reserves and our country's close relationship with Israel figure into our calculations? What is the challenge presented to America by the growing importance of Islam in the politics of the Middle East?

To prepare you for your assignment, you will first explore the history of U.S. involvement in the Middle East since World War I. The second part of the background reading examines the new era that began with the Persian Gulf War and analyzes the issues that have risen to the top of the U.S. policy agenda in the region.

Land of the Bible

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, most Americans were introduced to the Middle East through the Bible. The territories that are today at the center of the Arab-Israeli conflict were referred to as the "holy land." To a large extent, America's first impressions of the Middle East were filtered through the eyes of Protestant missionaries. The missionaries came in hope of converting the Muslims of the region to Christianity. Their energy and optimism, however, quickly ran up against the traditions of the Middle East.

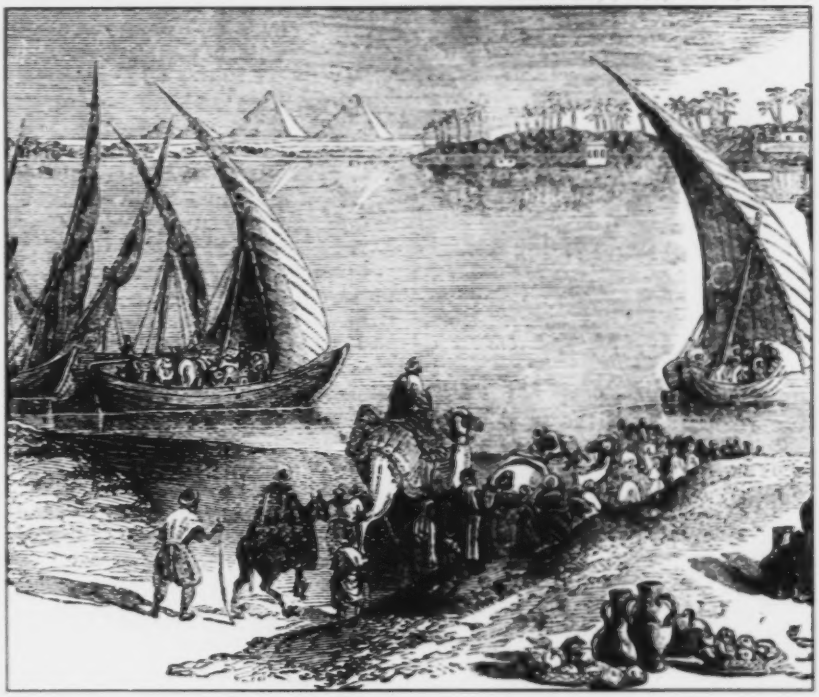
The Middle Easterners that greeted the missionary pioneers in the early 1800s were only beginning to understand how far their region had fallen behind the Western world of Europe and the United States. They could hardly be blamed for their ignorance. After all, the Middle East had been the cradle of civilization and the birthplace of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. In the Middle Ages, the Islamic empires of the region had been at the center of science, scholarship, and commerce. The Ottoman Turks, who by the 1500s ruled a huge empire stretching from the Persian Gulf to the western end of North Africa, struck terror throughout Europe. As late as 1683, an Ottoman army reached the gates of Vienna in central Europe before being turned back.

With the rise of the West, however, the relationship increasingly turned one-sided. The advances in science and technology that fueled the Industrial Revolution in Britain, the United States, and other Western nations were slow to reach the Middle East. The Ottoman military was unable to match the firepower of its European rivals.

By the 19th century, the Ottoman empire was in steady retreat. In southeastern Europe, the Ottomans lost territory to local independence movements. In the Caucasus, they were driven out by ambitious Russian tsars. Meanwhile, the Ottoman economy increasingly fell under the economic domination of Britain and France.

The United States kept its distance from the disintegrating Ottoman empire. Although the United States was the world's leading economic power by the turn of the 20th century, American leaders were not eager to join the European scramble to establish

From A History of the Empire and People of Turkey



The 19th-century Middle East in the Western imagination.

colonies in Asia and Africa.

Until the outbreak of World War I in 1914, America's connection to the Middle East was limited to a string of missionary schools and hospitals, and a handful of trading companies. The missionaries themselves had given up on their initial plans to convert Muslims. Under Ottoman law, Muslims who gave up their faith could be put to death. Instead, the missionaries worked mostly with local Christians.

Wartime pacts and promises

The modern Middle East grew out of the devastation of World War I. In the early months of the war, the Ottoman empire allied itself with Germany and the Austro-Hungarian empire. The Ottoman leadership, which had come under the control of extreme Turkish nationalists, hoped to build a new Turkish empire stretching into Central Asia.

In fact, World War I resulted in the destruction of the Ottoman empire. Although the decisive battles of the war took place in Europe, the Middle East was thrown into turmoil nonetheless. British forces, with the assistance of their Arab allies, drove Ottoman armies out of most of the empire's Arab provinces. Fighting along the Caucasus front between Russia and the Ottoman Turks turned vast areas into a wasteland.

Meanwhile, much of the most important action took place away from the battlefield. In 1916, diplomats from Britain and France signed a secret treaty concerning the postwar division of the Ottoman empire. Under the terms of what was known as the Sykes-Picot accord, the British and French agreed to carve up the Arab provinces of the empire between themselves.

In 1917, the British issued the "Balfour Declaration," pledging to help establish a "national home" for Jews in what were then the Ottoman provinces of Palestine. The British hoped that the declaration would rally Jewish opinion, especially in the United States, behind the Allied war effort. At the same time, the British won the support of Sharif Hussein, the ruler of Mecca, by promising their help in setting up an independent Arab state after the war. In exchange, Hussein incited a rebellion against the Ottoman Turks in Arabia.

When World War I finally ended in 1918, the British and French backed away from most of their wartime commitments to Arab leaders. Rather, they were determined to assert their control over the Middle East.

Wilson champions self-determination

President Woodrow Wilson presented the main obstacle to British and French designs. Wilson had been reluctant to join the Allied war effort. When he led the United States into World War I in 1917, he insisted that his country was fighting for a higher set of ideals than the European powers. He announced a sweeping fourteen-point peace plan as substantial numbers of American troops were reaching Europe. Among the key principles of Wilson's proposal was a call for a postwar international system based on the "self-determination" of nations.

Arab leaders applauded Wilson's views. They saw the president's emphasis on self-determination as an endorsement of Arab efforts to govern themselves without outside interference. In contrast, the British and French realized that self-determination undermined their plan to impose the Sykes-Picot treaty on the Middle East.

Ultimately, the British and French won the test of wills with Wilson. At the Paris Peace Conference following World War I, Wilson backed down from his defense of self-determination to maintain unity among the Allies. Meanwhile, in the United States he encountered strong opposition to American participation in the international system he envisioned. In 1920, the Senate soundly rejected the treaty that Wilson had helped negotiate. Wilson's defeat was a turning point for America. Over the next two decades, U.S. foreign policy was to be marked by a mood of "isolationism," in which American leaders sought to avoid troubles overseas.

Once the United States had retreated from the international scene, Britain and France were free to complete the division of the defeated Ottoman empire. The British laid claim to the chief prizes of the region, extending their influence to Mesopotamia (present-day Iraq and Kuwait), most of the Arabian peninsula, Palestine, and Transjordan (present-day

Jordan). The French were left with what are today Syria and Lebanon. (The French had extended their control over present-day Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia before World War I.)

Even Iran, itself never a part of the Ottoman empire, increasingly fell within Britain's sphere of economic domination. Turkey was to be the only Middle Eastern country to attain complete independence after World War I. There, a nationalist movement overthrew the last remnants of the Ottoman empire and established a republic in 1923.

The new states of the Middle East were given a special status under international law. Rather than being classified as colonies, they were defined as "mandates." In reality, the Arabs within the mandates saw themselves as subjects of European colonialism.

By the early 1920s, the outlines of today's Middle East were clearly recognizable. With few changes, the map drawn by the Allies at the Paris Peace Conference was to remain intact. Britain's contradictory promises during World War I had planted the seeds of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The heavy hand of European imperialism bred growing resentment against the West, giving rise to new political movements that stressed angry nationalism or a revival of Islam. On the economic front, the stage was set for the development of the oil industry in the Middle East.

The Politics of Oil

The contest for control of the Middle East after World War I was driven largely by oil. The war effort had been mostly powered by coal, but far-sighted military strategists understood that the next major war would be fueled by oil.

The British were especially sensitive to the importance of oil. Although they ruled a huge empire, their prospects for finding oil in their colonies were poor. Their best shot at gaining access to large oil reserves was through domination of Iraq and Iran. The French too were concerned about oil. In ceding control of Iraq to Britain, they bargained for a 25 percent share of the mandate's oil industry.

Compared to the European Allies, the United States was a latecomer to the oil politics of the Middle East. Unlike Britain and France, the United States was an oil giant, producing roughly two-thirds of the world's output during World War I. Nonetheless, U.S. policymakers encouraged American oil companies to begin looking overseas for new oil reserves.

To maintain good relations with the United States in the 1920s, the British agreed to allow American oil companies to participate in the development of the Middle East's oil resources. At the time, the two main centers of oil production in the region were northern Iraq and the Iranian side of the Persian Gulf.

Serious oil exploration in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait did not take place until the 1930s. Leading members of the Saudi royal family balked at opening their country to foreign oil firms, worried that their traditional way of life would be disrupted.

The Saudis, however, needed money. In 1933, they signed a sixty-year agreement with Standard Oil of California (SOCAL). In exchange for $175,000 up front and the promise of royalty payments on any oil produced, the Americans were permitted to explore 360,000 square miles of eastern Saudi Arabia (an area larger than Texas and Oklahoma combined). SOCAL invested $10 million before making a major discovery in 1938. At about the same time, a British-American partnership struck oil in Kuwait.

The first oil war

The eruption of World War II in 1939 dashed hopes of turning a quick profit from the newly discovered oil fields of the Middle East. Instead of expanding production, American and British leaders took measures to prevent the energy resources of the Middle East from falling into the hands of Nazi Germany. In 1941, British and Soviet troops jointly occupied Iran to block German ambitions. Technicians even made plans to destroy the oil wells of the Persian Gulf in case Germany invaded the region.

In fact, the Allies stopped the Nazi war machine well short of the Persian Gulf. Nonetheless, World War II had a profound impact on the position of the Middle East in international affairs.

As strategists in World War I had foreseen, oil was indeed the lifeblood of the armies of World War II. The decisive weapons of the conflict — airplanes,

tanks, and military trucks — all ran on fuels derived from oil. The war aims of the leading Axis powers, Germany and Japan, were shaped by their quest for oil resources.

The United States was the main engine of the Allied victory in World War II. Protected from enemy attack by two oceans, American industry boomed. By the end of 1942, U.S. military production surpassed the output of Germany and Japan combined. By the next year, American factories turned out roughly 100,000 warplanes.

The United States was blessed with abundant oil reserves. In 1940, for example, the United States produced 63 percent of the world's oil (compared to less than 5 percent from the Middle East). America's wartime leaders, however, feared that demand would soon outstrip supply. Like their British counterparts in World War I, U.S. officials in World War II sought to ensure their country's access to oil.

> *If there should be a World War III it would have to be fought with someone else's petroleum, because the United States wouldn't have it.*
>
> *—Henry Ickes, secretary of the interior*

The U.S. strategy included fresh attention to Saudi Arabia. Before 1939, the United States had not bothered to post a single diplomat in the country. In 1943, however, President Franklin Roosevelt began providing aid to the Saudi monarchy, which was on the verge of financial collapse because of the war.

America's Superpower Role

In addition to elevating the importance of oil, World War II brought down the old order of international relations. Western Europe no longer occupied center stage in world affairs. Instead, the postwar era was to be defined by the superpower rivalry of the United States and the Soviet Union.

By 1948, the hostility between the former wartime allies seemed frozen in place. What was known as the Cold War would eventually reach every corner of the globe, heightening tensions to particularly dangerous levels in the Middle East.

That same year, two other developments were to raise the prominence of the Middle East. For the first time, the United States in 1948 imported more oil than it exported. A 42 percent jump in gasoline consumption from 1945 to 1950 was the primary factor behind America's growing thirst for oil.

Second, 1948 saw the birth of the modern state of Israel in what had been the British mandate of Palestine. Half a century after its inception, the Zionist movement had achieved its goal of establishing an independent Jewish homeland.

Together, the Cold War, the demand for oil, and the establishment of Israel would dominate U.S. policy in the Middle East in the postwar era. After centuries in the shadows of world affairs, the Middle East was destined to gain a vital share of the international spotlight.

Cold War in the Middle East

Beginning in the early 1800s, Britain had been the leading power in the Middle East. Britain controlled the Suez Canal (linking the Red Sea and the Mediterranean) and most of Egypt after 1882. British naval forces patrolled the Arabian Sea and Persian Gulf, guarding shipping lanes to India, the jewel of the British empire.

In 1947, however, British officials told their American allies that they could no longer maintain their presence in the Middle East. World War II had nearly bankrupted Britain. Britain's postwar leaders saw their enormous empire as a financial burden and drew up plans to grant independence to British colonies. They urged the administration of President Harry Truman to fill the vacuum in the Middle East ahead of the Soviets.

In fact, the Soviets had already begun to assert their interests in the Middle East. In Iran, the Soviets delayed the withdrawal of their troops. In Turkey, they raised territorial claims along the Soviet border and insisted on sharing control of the straits connecting the Black Sea and the Mediterranean.

Truman's firm stance forced the Soviets to back down. However, U.S. resolve remained in doubt until 1947, when the president announced a $400 million foreign aid package to Turkey and Greece. In what

was labeled as the Truman Doctrine, Truman pledged U.S. support for governments resisting communism.

The Truman Doctrine confirmed that the United States was prepared to step into the shoes of the British in the Middle East. America's long isolation from international politics was coming to an end. For U.S. policymakers, that meant that the Persian Gulf was to eventually rank second in importance only to Western Europe. Protecting the region's oil reserves from Soviet control was deemed critical to the West's economic survival.

No country zoomed faster toward the top of the U.S. agenda than Saudi Arabia. Although Saudi oil production in the late 1940s was still meager, geologists had already estimated that the country contained the world's largest oil reserves. They understood that the center of the world's oil industry would soon shift from the Gulf of Mexico to the Persian Gulf.

American executives of the Arabian-American Oil Company, known as Aramco, increasingly cooperated with U.S. foreign policymakers to ensure smooth relations with the desert kingdom. When Saudi King Ibn Saud voiced worries about threats from Arab rivals and the Soviets, President Truman assured him of U.S. support.

> *No threat to your [Ibn Saud's] kingdom could occur which would not be a matter of immediate concern to the United States.*
>
> *—President Harry Truman*

Israel's creation plants seeds of conflict

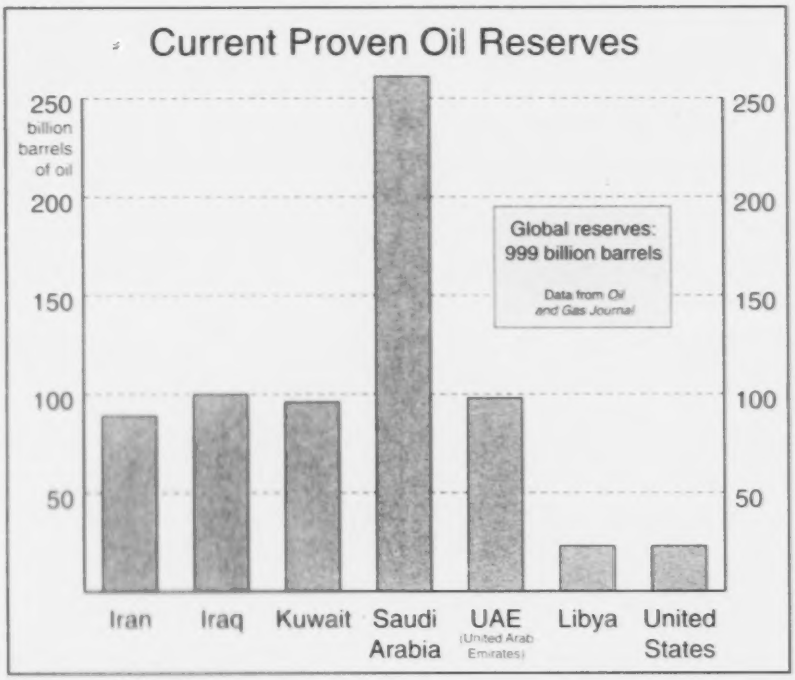
America's efforts to outflank the Soviets in the Persian Gulf were complicated by the establishment of Israel. King Saud and most other Arab leaders opposed Zionism. Saud even threatened to break his contract with Aramco to protest U.S. policy. Nonetheless, the United States played a key role in bringing the Jewish state into existence.

Zionism had its origins in Europe, where Jews had long been subjected to persecution. At the end of the 19th century, some Jewish intellectuals argued that their people could safely flourish only by establishing an independent state in their ancient homeland. In the early 1900s, Zionists sought to gain a foothold in what was then Palestine by buying land for Jewish colonies.

Between 1922 and 1939, the Jewish population in Palestine rose from 84,000 to 445,000, or about 30 percent of the total. The Zionist movement, however, increasingly found itself at odds with the aspirations of Palestinian Arabs to forge a state of their own. British efforts to strike a balance between Palestinians and Jews failed to hold down the escalating tensions.

Zionism might not have fulfilled its mission without the tragedy of the Holocaust. During World War II, Adolf Hitler sought to exterminate Jews in his short-lived empire. Six million Jews were put to death by the Nazis.

After the war, hundreds of thousands of Jewish refugees saw immigration to Palestine as their only hope for rebuilding their lives. The Holocaust also won the Zionists widespread sympathy in the West. Truman was personally committed to the Zionist cause.



In 1947, the British turned over responsibility for Palestine to the newly formed United Nations (UN). A plan to divide the mandate between Jews and Palestinians passed the UN General Assembly by two votes, thanks in large part to American lobbying.

While most Jews applauded the UN decision, anger swept over the Arab world. Fighting soon engulfed much of Palestine. With the withdrawal of the last British forces in May 1948, the state of Israel was proclaimed and immediately won recognition from the United States and the Soviet Union. For the next eight months, Jews and Arabs battled for territory. Troops from Egypt, Syria, Transjordan, Lebanon, and Iraq sided with the Palestinians.

By the time a truce was reached in January 1949, the Jews had seized a large portion of the land that the UN had designated for the Palestinians. What was left of the former mandate was claimed by Transjordan (which absorbed the West Bank) and Egypt (which held the Gaza Strip). More than 500,000 Palestinians became refugees. Arab countries refused to make peace with the fledgling Israeli state. Without a treaty, the cease-fire lines became in effect the borders between Israel and its neighbors.

Although the Truman administration approved a $100 million loan for Israel, U.S. policy remained torn. Within the State Department (the governmental body responsible for carrying out U.S. foreign policy), most officials opposed support for Israel. They feared an Arab backlash against the United States.

Voices of Arab nationalism

The politics of the Arab world in fact underwent deep changes after World War II. As in other regions of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, resentment and mistrust toward the West spread in the Middle East. As Britain and France retreated from the region, Arab nationalists turned their criticism against the old political order. The monarchies and rich landowners that had cooperated with Britain and France after World War I were accused of betraying Arab interests. In the 1950s and 1960s, nationalist military officers overthrew kingdoms in Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and Libya.

Egypt's Gamal Abd al-Nasser was the most prominent voice of Arab nationalism. A former army colonel, Nasser emerged as Egypt's leader after taking part in a coup that toppled the country's corrupt king in 1952. Nasser addressed his message not just to Egypt, but to the larger Arab world. He campaigned for pan-Arabism — the unification of Arabs into a single state. Nasser's prestige enabled him to skillfully play the United States and Soviet Union off one another.

Nasser thrived on drama. In 1956, he triggered an international crisis by declaring Egyptian ownership of the Suez Canal. The canal was an apt symbol for Nasser. It had been built jointly by the French and the Egyptians in 1869 and had later fallen under British control. The British and French loudly denounced Nasser's move. Joined by Israel, the two waning colonial powers attacked Egypt and seized the canal. President Dwight Eisenhower was furious that the British, French, and Israelis had acted on their own. He forced them to quickly withdraw.

While the Suez Crisis was a humiliating setback for Britain and France, Nasser's reputation soared. Over the next decade, he strengthened his position as the most dynamic leader of the Arab world. Part of Nasser's appeal stemmed from his condemnation of Israel, which Nasser depicted as a Western outpost in the Middle East. In 1958, Nasser announced the merger of Egypt and Syria. He also steadily built up his army, mostly with Soviet weapons.

U.S. officials mistrusted Nasser's motives but felt that his popularity could not be ignored. After the Suez Crisis, the United States resumed limited assistance to Egypt. At the same time, U.S. officials began to see Israel as a counterweight to expanding Soviet influence in Egypt, Syria, and Iraq. In 1962, President John Kennedy approved the sale of advanced antiaircraft missiles to Israel, along with a loan to help the Israelis pay for their purchase.

> *We are interested that Israel should keep up its sensitive, tremendous, historic task.*
>
> *—President John Kennedy*

Three years later, President Lyndon Johnson permitted the Israelis to buy more than 200 tanks, again with generous financing. The arms sales marked

the beginning of a steady flow of American military equipment to Israel. No formal alliance was signed, but the United States and Israel were clearly developing a special relationship.

Six-Day War

Overheated nationalism, growing superpower involvement, and an escalating arms build-up ignited the third Arab-Israeli war in 1967. The immediate cause was Nasser's decision in May 1967 to order the withdrawal of UN peacekeepers separating Egyptian and Israeli forces in the Sinai Peninsula and to deny Israeli ships access to the Red Sea.

President Johnson attempted to resolve the crisis diplomatically. Israeli leaders, however, placed little faith in diplomatic solutions. In June 1967, they launched a surprise attack against Egypt, destroying most of the Egyptian and Syrian air forces on the ground. With control of the air, Israeli tanks rolled across the Sinai to the Suez Canal. On their eastern flank, the Israelis drove the Jordanian army out of the Old City of Jerusalem and overran the West Bank.

Within two days, Egypt and Jordan were ready to accept a UN resolution for a cease-fire proposed by the United States. Israel, however, continued its military operations. Israeli warplanes bombed a U.S. communications ship based off the coast of Egypt, killing thirty-four American sailors. Although Israeli leaders claimed the attack was a mistake, U.S. officials privately believed that Israel's intent was to conceal Israeli military preparations against Syria. Indeed, two days later the Israelis overran Syrian defenses on the strategic Golan Heights. Syria quickly agreed to a truce. What came to be known as the Six-Day War ended in a complete military victory for Israel.

The Six-Day War again changed the map of the Middle East. Israel refused to withdraw from the territory it had conquered. Instead, the Israelis became responsible for governing more than 1 million Palestinians on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

The Six-Day War also set the stage for the next round of fighting in the Middle East. The crushing defeat of the Arab armies exposed the hollowness of Nasser's pan-Arab nationalism. Arab leaders were more determined than ever to match the military might of the Israelis. Increasingly, they turned to the Soviets for help.

The death of Nasser from a heart attack in 1970 brought to power a more narrowly focused Egyptian leader, Anwar al-Sadat. Sadat's top priority was to regain the Sinai Peninsula. When American diplomacy failed to persuade Israel to withdraw, Sadat began making preparations for war.

Winds of Change

In the fourth Arab-Israeli war, the element of surprise belonged to the Arabs. Egypt and Syria opened a two-front offensive against Israel on Yom Kippur, the most sacred day on the Jewish calendar. Along the Suez Canal, Egypt's army broke through Israeli lines and spilled into the Sinai Peninsula. At the same time, Syrian troops overwhelmed Israel's defenses on the Golan Heights and were poised to attack northern Israel.

Israel's army quickly recovered from its setbacks. Within days, the Israelis drove a wedge between Egyptian forces in the Sinai and crossed to the west bank of the Suez Canal. Against the Syrians, they soon regained the Golan Heights and swept down toward Damascus, the Syrian capital. By the end of October 1973, after less than a month of fighting, the Israelis agreed to stop their advance.

For the United States, the so-called October War brought America's chief concerns in the Middle East to the boiling point. In the first week of the conflict, Washington's commitment to Israel was put to the test. Israel's prime minister, Golda Meir, pleaded with President Richard Nixon to ship U.S. military supplies to her country. Nixon approved a resupply effort, but did not want to give Israel a lopsided advantage on the battlefield.

Cold War politics ultimately convinced Nixon to step up the flow of arms. From the outbreak of the October War, the Soviet Union showered Egypt and Syria with military assistance. By the second week of fighting, the United States decided to do the same for Israel and began airlifting 1,000 tons of military supplies a day. Superpower tensions rose further when the Soviets vowed to send troops to the region to stop

Israel's advance. Nixon warned the Soviets against taking action on their own. He put the U.S. military on worldwide alert to emphasize American resolve.

The oil weapon

Most significantly, the October War prompted Arab states to lead an oil embargo against the United States. The Arabs had in fact tried to use oil as a weapon during the 1967 war, but their effort to cut off oil exports to the United States and Britain quickly fizzled.

By 1973, however, changes in the world oil market favored the Arabs. From 1970 to the start of the October War, oil prices had doubled. During the same period, U.S. imports nearly doubled, exceeding one-third of total American consumption. America's allies in Western Europe and Japan were almost entirely dependent on imported oil, mostly from the Middle East. Rising demand allowed the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to steadily push up prices for the first time since its formation in 1960.

In mid-October 1973, Arab oil-producing states raised prices on their exported oil by 70 percent. When President Nixon proposed giving Israel $2.2 billion in military aid a few days later, the Arabs responded by completely cutting off oil shipments to the United States. At the same time, they reduced their overall production by 10 percent and vowed to lower oil output by 5 percent a month until Israel withdrew from the territories occupied in the 1967 War and restored the rights of the Palestinians.

The impact of the Arab cutbacks on the international oil market was hardly catastrophic. By the end of 1973, world oil production had fallen about 9 percent. Major non-Arab oil producers, such as Iran and Venezuela, increased their exports as new markets opened to them. Nonetheless, the Arab measures set off an economic panic. Oil prices rose as high as $17 a barrel — six times the price in early October. Gasoline prices in the United States jumped 40 percent. Over the next two years, America's economic output dropped 6 percent, while unemployment doubled and inflation surged.

The Arab states also created fractures in the Western alliance. Most Western European countries

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and Japan backed away from support of Israel. In turn, they were spared deeper cuts in their oil imports.

The oil embargo, however, failed to bend U.S. policy. Sadat believed that continuing to pressure the United States would backfire. In March 1974, he convinced his fellow Arab leaders to lift the embargo.

Egyptian-Israeli peace

While the October War was the most destructive conflict yet between Arabs and Israelis, it also laid the groundwork for the first steps toward peace. The early battlefield successes of the Arab armies had soothed the humiliating sting of the 1967 War. Arab pride, especially in Egypt, was partially restored.

The initiative for peace came from Sadat. In 1977, he visited Israel and spoke before Israel's parliament. Meanwhile, U.S. officials worked behind the scenes to set the stage for serious negotiations.

In 1978, President Jimmy Carter invited Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin to the presidential retreat at Camp David for peace talks. The negotiations were scheduled to last three days. Instead, they dragged on for two weeks.

Thanks largely to Carter's persistence, the talks produced a peace treaty between Israel and Egypt. In exchange for Israel's withdrawal from the Sinai Peninsula, Egypt became the first Arab country to recognize Israel. U.S. foreign aid sweetened the deal for both countries. Israel received $3 billion in immediate military assistance, while Egypt was given $1.5 billion. (Israel and Egypt have remained the top recipients of U.S. foreign aid.)

What were known as the Camp David accords, however, scarcely addressed other aspects of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Arab leaders condemned Sadat for neglecting the Palestinian cause and expelled Egypt from the Arab League. In 1981, Sadat himself was assassinated by Islamist* extremists.

Islamist revolution in Iran

The Camp David accords brought Egypt securely into the U.S. camp in the Middle East. At the same time, the treaty gave the Soviets greater leverage among their own circle of allies, such as Syria and Iraq. To counter the Soviets, U.S. officials placed greater weight on their relations with other long-time friends in the region.

Aside from Israel, the United States counted on close ties with Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Iran. Turkey was linked to the United States through membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and ample U.S. foreign aid. The Saudis, while opposing Israel, relied heavily on American firms to market their oil exports and invest their profits.

The United States was bound to Iran by both military security and oil interests. In addition, Iran's shah, or king, Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, was tied to Washington through his own complicated past. In 1953, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) helped the shah topple a nationalist prime minister who threatened his power. At the time, Pahlavi was a timid, inexperienced ruler. Over the next two decades, U.S. support bolstered his confidence and ambitions.

By the early 1970s, the shah imagined that he could rekindle the greatness of ancient Persia in modern Iran. To celebrate the 2,500th anniversary of the Persian empire, he spent at least $100 million to host a lavish banquet that featured a 165-person catering staff from Paris and 25,000 bottles of French wine. The rise in oil prices in 1973 permitted the shah to increase his spending, particularly on weapons. By the mid-1970s, Iran accounted for half of U.S. arms exports.

Both the shah and U.S. policymakers, however, underestimated the anger simmering just below the surface of Iranian society. The shah's efforts to modernize Iran's educational system and redistribute land sparked protests among the country's Islamic clergy. His push toward industrialization tempted millions of peasants to abandon the countryside. Iran's cities were soon overcrowded, while the gap between the rich and the poor widened.

> *Iran, because of the great leadership of the shah, is an island of stability in one of the more troubled regions of the world.*
>
> *—President Jimmy Carter*

*The term "Islamist" is used to describe political movements based on the principles of Islam.

Radical Islamist leaders were in the best position to exploit the instability in Iranian society. They emerged at the helm of a broad opposition movement that included democrats, nationalists, and communists. In 1978, they began organizing demonstrations against the shah. The shah responded with force, ordering the army and police to smash the protests. In September, they opened fire on a huge crowd in Tehran, Iran's capital, killing or wounding as many as 2,000 demonstrators.

The shah, who was suffering from cancer, soon lost the will to hold on to power. In January 1979, he left the country. Two weeks later, the spiritual leader of Iran's Islamist movement, the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, returned to Iran from exile.

Khomeini intended to transform Iran into a pure Islamic state. His revolution aimed at purging the country of Western popular culture. Movies and music from the West were prohibited. Alcohol was banned. Women were ordered to cover themselves in public from head to toe.

Khomeini branded the United States as the "great Satan." (He referred to the Soviet Union as the "lesser Satan.") When Carter permitted the shah to enter the United States for medical treatment, Khomeini claimed that Washington was plotting a counter-revolution. In November 1979, Iranian students seized the U.S. embassy in Tehran. For over a year, they held the U.S. embassy staff as hostages. Carter's attempt at a military rescue failed, leaving eight American troops dead.

> *Our relations with the United States are the relations of the oppressed and the oppressor.*
> *—Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini*

The Iranian Revolution touched off another panic in the oil market. Before the revolution, Iran had been the world's second largest oil exporter (trailing only Saudi Arabia). By the end of 1978, the foreigners who managed much of Iran's oil industry had been evacuated and Iranian oil exports had stopped flowing. Again prices soared, nearly tripling in a few weeks. Americans were forced to wait in long lines for gasoline.

Iran-Iraq War

The crimp in world oil supplies was compounded by the outbreak of war between Iran and Iraq in September 1980. Iraq's leader, Saddam Hussein, hoped to take advantage of the confusion in the Iranian army to seize a disputed waterway spilling into the Persian Gulf. He also aimed to silence Iran's campaign to spread Islamist revolution elsewhere in the Middle East.

Saddam's strategy called for delivering a quick knockout blow, concentrating on Iran's oil facilities. Instead, Iraq's invasion stalled. Iran counter-attacked but lacked the strength to defeat Saddam's impressive military. For the next eight years, the war seesawed back and forth. Iraq had an advantage in air power, missiles, and even chemical weapons. Saddam Hussein also benefited from the financial backing of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and other Arab oil producers. Iran, however, could count on millions of dedicated volunteers. Tens of thousands were killed in human-wave attacks on Iraqi positions, often with plastic keys to heaven dangling from their necks.

The administration of President Ronald Reagan remained neutral during the war, but was particularly wary of an Iranian victory. Reagan began playing a more active role in 1986, when Iran stepped up attacks against Kuwaiti oil tankers in the Persian Gulf. The United States extended Iraq credit to buy advanced American weapons and shared military intelligence. Washington also permitted Kuwaiti ships to sail under the American flag and provided them military escorts.

By the time Iraq and Iran agreed to a cease-fire in 1988, their war had claimed more than 1 million lives. Iraq had gained the upper hand on the battlefield in the final months of the conflict, in part through the use of chemical weapons, but neither side could claim victory.

At the same time, the United States and other developed nations learned to live with the uncertainty of the Middle East's oil industry. The oil price hikes of the 1970s spurred energy conservation in wealthy countries. The fuel efficiency of the average American car more than doubled between 1975 and 1985. By 1983, oil consumption in the non-communist world

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had dropped by 11 percent from 1979 levels. Higher prices also led oil companies to develop new resources in the North Sea, Alaska, and other sites outside the Middle East. Coal, natural gas, and nuclear power gained a greater share of the energy market. From $34 a barrel at the beginning of the 1980s, oil prices slid to around $18 a barrel by the end of the decade.

Civil war fractures Lebanon

While the Iraq-Iran War dominated events in the Persian Gulf during the 1980s, Lebanon was the main focus of attention in the eastern Mediterranean. Lebanon had long been home to a patchwork of Christian and Muslim groups. Beirut, Tripoli, and other Lebanese ports were centers of Middle Eastern trade and commerce. Beginning in 1975, however, the country was torn by civil war.

Before the fighting died down in the late 1980s, nearly 150,000 people had been killed. Moreover, the war drew in most of Lebanon's neighbors, as well as the United States. Syrian leaders, who believed Lebanon belonged under their wing, sent in troops to occupy most of the eastern part of the country. During much of the conflict, Syrian forces controlled the balance of power among Lebanon's competing militias.

In 1982, Israel drove into Lebanon to root out the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). PLO units had set up bases in Lebanon after they were expelled from Jordan in 1970. Israel pushed the PLO north of Beirut, bombarding the Lebanese capital and prompting the United States to negotiate a settlement that allowed Palestinian fighters to evacuate to Tunisia and Algeria.

In hope of stabilizing Lebanon, the United States sent in American troops as part of an international peacekeeping force. The Americans, however, were soon caught in the middle of the civil war. In 1983, a suicide bomber drove a truckload of explosives into the U.S. marine barracks at the Beirut airport. Two hundred and forty-one troops were killed. A few months later, President Reagan pulled the U.S. peacekeeping force out.

In the United States, the Beirut bombing reinforced the Middle East's reputation as a dangerous and hostile region. Most Americans favored limiting our country's involvement in the area. Within a few years, however, the United States was about to plunge deeper than ever into the Middle East.

Part II: Weighing U.S. Priorities in the Middle East

On July 25, 1990, the U.S. ambassador to Iraq, April Glaspie, met with Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein at the presidential palace in Baghdad. Their conversation focused on Saddam's charge that Kuwait was pumping oil that rightfully belonged to Iraq from deposits along the Iraqi-Kuwaiti border. The Iraqi dictator also complained that Kuwait was holding down oil prices to slow his country's economic recovery. When Glaspie left the meeting, she was under the impression that she had clearly warned Saddam of the dangers of using force to resolve his dispute with Kuwait. Eight days later, 100,000 Iraqi troops poured across the desert border into Kuwait.

A few years earlier, the United States might have hesitated to take strong action against Iraq for fear of setting off a wider international crisis. By mid-1990, however, both the world and the U.S. outlook had changed.

Persian Gulf oil and Israel's security continued to head the list of U.S. concerns in the Middle East. But the third element — containing the influence of the Soviet Union — had faded. Under Mikhail Gorbachev, the Soviet Union in the late 1980s had sought to build bridges to the West. The divisions of the Cold War had given way to a spirit of cooperation. Moreover, the Soviet Union itself was beginning to teeter under the weight of an ailing economy and political turmoil.

During the Cold War, Iraq had been a close ally of the Soviets. Within hours of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, however, Gorbachev stopped arms shipments to Saddam and then joined the United States in supporting a UN Security Council resolution demanding Iraq's immediate withdrawal from Kuwait.

With the Soviets on his side, President George Bush had an opportunity to steer the international system in a new direction. Bush spoke of erecting a "new world order" in which the leading powers would work together to prevent aggression and enforce the rule of law internationally. He intended to make Saddam's grab for Kuwait a test case. At the same time, America's traditional interests in oil and Israel figured into Bush's calculations as well.

In the following pages, you will learn more about the changes that have recast America's connection to the Middle East in the aftermath of the Persian Gulf War. Two topics stand out: the region's shifting balance of power and the Arab-Israeli peace process.

Persian Gulf War Reshapes Policy

Decisions made during the heat of the Persian Gulf crisis were to leave a lasting impact on U.S. policy in the Middle East. In the days immediately following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, Bush's top priority was to prevent Saddam from seizing the oil fields of northeastern Saudi Arabia. Saddam's occupation of Kuwait had given him control of one-quarter of global oil reserves. Extending his reach 200 miles further into Saudi Arabia would have put nearly half of the world's oil in his grasp. Bush rushed American troops to the region to block the Iraqi army's path.

Once Saudi Arabia was protected, the president carefully built domestic and international support for stronger measures against Iraq. He first pushed for an economic blockade against Iraq, then won UN approval to use "all necessary means" to force Iraq out of Kuwait. A deadline was set — January 15, 1991 — for Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait.

In five months, the United States positioned 540,000 troops in Saudi Arabia. America's European allies, as well as several Arab states, contributed forces as well. Bush favored attacking Iraq quickly. He doubted that economic sanctions alone would pressure Saddam out of Kuwait.

The president also felt that the coalition of twenty-eight nations he had assembled would not hold together long. Particularly worrisome was Saddam Hussein's appeal in the Arab world. Saddam sought to rekindle the Arab nationalism that Gamal Abd al-Nasser had popularized. American officials feared that his message would deepen hostility toward the United States throughout the Middle East.

Within the United States, debate about how America should respond to Iraq's aggression was intense. Opposition to using force against Iraq was strong, especially from U.S. military leaders. Many

warned that Iraq would turn to chemical weapons or international terrorism if attacked. There were worries that Iraq might even possess nuclear bombs. Others argued that economic sanctions should be given more time to take effect. When Bush asked the Senate to approve military action, his request passed by only five votes.

> *Our jobs, our way of life, our own freedom and the freedom of friendly countries around the world would all suffer if control of the world's great oil reserves fell into the hands of Saddam Hussein.*
>
> *—President George Bush*

After the assault against Iraq began in mid-January 1991, Americans quickly rallied behind the war effort. Despite Saddam's prediction of "the mother of all battles," his army proved no match for the United States and its allies. For over a month, coalition warplanes pounded Iraqi targets with high-tech weaponry. By the time allied ground troops moved forward in late February 1991, communication links within Iraq's army had been shattered. Coalition forces retook Kuwait's capital, Kuwait City, with little resistance.

After 100 hours, Bush brought the ground war to a halt. The president objected to destroying Iraq's retreating army. Instead, he allowed what was left of Iraq's front-line divisions to limp northward.

The Persian Gulf War was one of the most lopsided conflicts in history. Iraq's military presented few obstacles to the advance of the coalition forces, while Iraqi missile attacks against Israel and Saudi Arabia caused minimal damage. Saddam Hussein inflicted his heaviest blow against the environment by ordering retreating Iraq troops to set hundreds of Kuwaiti oil wells on fire and to spill thousands of barrels of oil into the Persian Gulf.

In all, 146 American troops were killed during the war. (Coalition forces suffered a total of 260 deaths.) Iraq lost as many as 100,000 people, both soldiers and civilians, in the war.

Through a combination of power and persuasion, the United States had won greater influence in the Middle East. At the same time, there were fresh responsibilities. Once the fighting in the Persian Gulf ended, leaders in the region looked to the United States to maintain the new, American-made order.

Oil trends

The Persian Gulf War passed without sparking another crisis in the oil market. Oil prices shot up in the days after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, but soon settled back to their earlier levels.

Saudi Arabia acted to calm the world oil market during the troubles in the Persian Gulf. After the UN imposed an embargo on oil exports from Iraq and Iraqi-occupied Kuwait, the Saudis increased production to offset the shortfall. By the mid-1990s, gasoline prices in the United States (taking inflation into account) had returned to levels not seen since before the 1973 oil embargo.

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Long-term trends, however, are more doubtful. Worldwide, demand for oil in recent years has been growing at about 2 percent annually. The economic boom in East Asia has fueled much of the rise. In the United States, dependence on imported oil is creeping up as well.

With energy prices low, Americans are again buying more fuel-hungry cars and paying less attention to conservation. As a result, U.S. oil consumption has increased 10 percent since the mid-1980s. Meanwhile, U.S. oil production has

Daily U.S. Oil Consumption since 1973

Figures are for thousands of barrels of oil.	**Total Net Oil Imports**	**Oil Imports from the Persian Gulf**	**Total Oil Consumption**
1995	7,886	1,573	17,725
1990	7,161	1,966	16,988
1985	4,286	311	15,726
1980	6,385	1,519	17,056
1975	5,846	1,165	16,322
1973	6,025	848	17,308

dropped by about one-third since its peak in 1970. The United States today relies on the Middle East for about 10 percent of its oil needs. (Oil accounts for 38 percent of our country's total energy consumption.)

The Middle East remains the unrivalled center of the international oil industry. The region contains over 60 percent of the world's proven oil reserves. Most of the new fields that were discovered in the North Sea, Alaska, and elsewhere in the West after the 1973 oil crisis have passed their peak production years. Middle East oil is also the cheapest to pump. The cost of extracting a barrel of oil from the North Sea, for example, typically exceeds $10, compared to less than $2 a barrel in the Persian Gulf area.

But while the Middle East's oil resources loom larger than ever in the global economy, the likelihood of a repetition of the 1973 oil embargo seems distant. The Middle East's main oil exporters — Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iran, and Iraq — are sharply divided on both economic and political issues. As never before, the United States has come to play the role of policeman in the neighborhood.

The Middle East's economic clout has also faded. After the 1973 oil price hikes, the fortunes of the major oil exporters were on the rise. One by one, Middle Eastern leaders negotiated new deals with Western oil companies that gave their countries ownership of the oil under their lands. (Except in Iran, the oil of the Middle East had belonged to foreign oil companies before the 1970s. Aramco, Shell, Gulf, and other Western giants had paid Middle Eastern governments a negotiated fee for the oil they pumped.) Huge profits transformed the Middle Eastern oil producers into international financial heavyweights.

Since the decline of oil prices in the mid-1980s, however, profit margins have shrunk. Ownership of the oil under their lands has not freed Middle Eastern countries from the constraints of the marketplace. Oil producers continue to depend mostly on Western oil companies to sell their product.

Oil's status in the world economy has slipped too. Today's most rapidly advancing economies are based primarily on manufacturing, not on raw materials. For example, Saudi Arabia generated $38 billion in oil exports in 1994. Taiwan, an East Asian country that imports virtually all of its oil, exported $93 billion worth of manufactured goods the same year.

Meanwhile, soaring populations, rising government expenditures, and arms imports have placed new financial pressures on Middle Eastern states.

America's desert outpost

American presidents since Jimmy Carter have expressed their determination to go to war to prevent hostile forces from gaining control of the Middle East's oil resources. During the Cold War, America's tough talk was directed primarily against the Soviet Union and its allies. Today, the spotlight is on regional strongmen, such as Saddam Hussein.

Without the need to confront the Soviets in Europe, American defense strategists see the Persian Gulf as the most probable arena for future U.S. military action. The war against Iraq elevated the region's

importance from the American perspective. It also convinced Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the smaller states of the Persian Gulf that an American military presence is needed in the region to safeguard their own security.

The presence of more than 15,000 American troops in the Persian Gulf, however, has created tensions of its own. Unlike in Western Europe, the Americans and the Arabs of the Persian Gulf share little in the way of common values and culture. Saudi Arabia and its five oil-rich neighbors in the Gulf Cooperation Council are ruled by iron-fisted royal families. Traditions run deep, and individual freedoms are limited. There are financial questions as well. Maintaining 100 warplanes, twenty warships, and heavily armored ground units costs about $70 billion a year. Although the Persian Gulf states pay part of the bill, the American portion represents a large chunk of the U.S. defense budget.

No blood for oil!
—Slogan protesting the Persian Gulf War

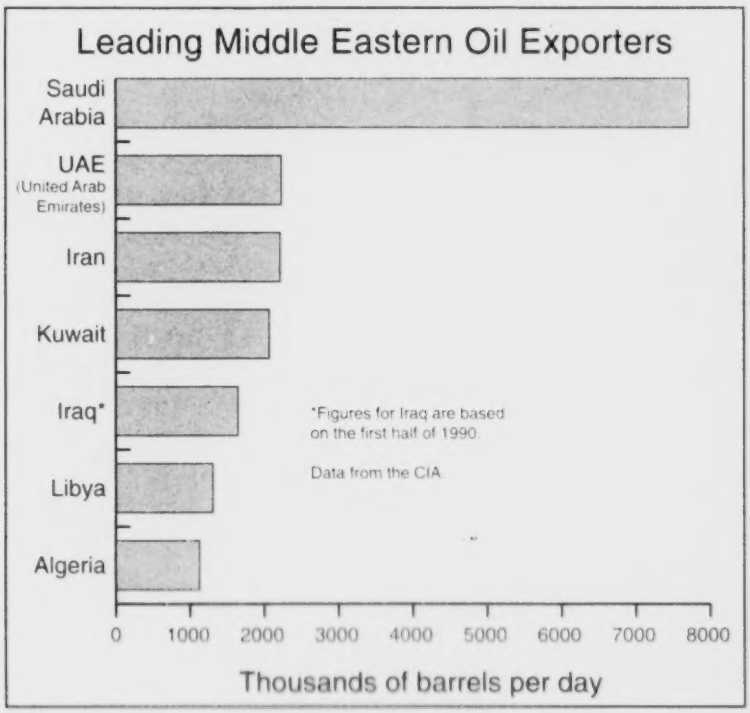
From the Arab standpoint, the U.S. military presence is a painful reminder of the Arab world's weaknesses and divisions. Along with the sudden wealth that oil has brought to the kingdoms of the Persian Gulf has come resentment from Arab neighbors. Kuwaitis, for example, received scant sympathy from most of the Arab world after their country was overrun by Iraq. At the time, most of the work in Kuwait was performed by more than 500,000 foreigners, nearly half of whom were Palestinian. Since Iraq's defeat, Kuwaitis have rebuilt in large part with labor from outside the Arab world, while counting on the United States for protection.

In addition to the physical presence of U.S. soldiers, the Middle East is also bristling with American weapons. The region is the world's largest market for arms exports, accounting for over half of the overseas sales of American companies. As the U.S. defense budget has shrunk, many American arms manufacturers have turned to the Middle East for new orders. In the next five years, the Persian Gulf states alone are expected to buy $75 billion worth of weapons.

Friends and Enemies

While concentrating on security issues, U.S. policymakers have paid much less attention to promoting democracy and human rights in the Middle East. In Latin America, the former Soviet Union, and other parts of the world, the United States often determines foreign aid, trade relations, and other aspects of foreign policy on the basis of political reform. In contrast, U.S. leaders have largely ignored what America's friends in the Middle East do within their borders.

The Arab kingdoms of the Persian Gulf present the most striking contradiction for U.S. policy. In Saudi Arabia, for example, women are not permitted to vote or even drive. Government and industry is dominated by the Saudi royal household, which numbers in the tens of thousands.



Other U.S. allies in the Middle East also remain tightly controlled from the top. Egypt's leadership, for example, deals harshly with local critics. Human rights groups complain that torture and imprisonment without trial are widespread. In Jordan, where King Hussein has opened up the political process in recent years, democracy still seems a distant goal.

Turkey is a special case, but in its own way equally troubling. Since the collapse of the Ottoman empire, Turkey has emerged as the most Westernized Muslim country in the Middle East. Democratic institutions have gained acceptance among the people, while Islam's influence on government policy has been curbed.

Yet, Turkey's image has been scarred by the ethnic divisions within the country. Turkey is home to roughly 12 million Kurds, an ancient people of the Middle East. Until 1991, the use of the Kurdish language or even acknowledging the existence of the Kurds was illegal. Today, Kurdish organizations of any kind are prohibited. With no political outlets to express their concerns, Kurdish groups have waged a low-scale guerrilla war in Turkey's southeast since 1984. The conflict has claimed more than 23,000 lives and left most of the region subject to emergency rule.

Turkey's civil war and the hard-line rule of most Arab states have contributed to the Middle East's reputation for instability. For U.S. policymakers, the chief fear is that shaky regimes will give way to pressure for radical change and make the region still more dangerous for the United States.

Enemies list

U.S. policy in the Middle East has been defined as much by our country's enemies as by our friends. Since the Persian Gulf War, America's main foes in the region have been Iran and Iraq.

In U.S. eyes, Iran and Iraq (along with Libya) are classified as "rogue states," or international outlaws. The charges against them are extensive. Iraq, and possibly Iran, have sought to develop nuclear weapons. Their stockpiles of chemical weapons are substantial. Both countries have also tried to dominate the Persian Gulf either through military force or political meddling. American officials contend that Iran and Iraq are key sponsors of international terrorism.

In the 1990s, U.S. policy in the Middle East has been geared toward containing the influence of Iran and Iraq. American constraints on Iraq have been comparatively straight-forward.

In the aftermath of the Persian Gulf War, President Bush backed away from pursuing the overthrow of Saddam Hussein's regime after Saudi Arabia and Turkey voiced concern that Iraq's disintegration would destabilize the region. Instead, Bush blocked Saddam from rebuilding his country's power and hoped that disgruntled military officers would eventually bring about a change in government.

At American urging, the UN Security Council has strictly limited Saddam Hussein's freedom to maneuver. Many of the economic sanctions that were imposed on Iraq in 1990 have been maintained. Saddam still cannot sell his country's oil freely on the

"On second thought, maybe you SHOULD get ride of Saddam Hussein...oh, and take out the garbage. That will be all."

© Bruce Beattie, Copley News Service

international market. The UN has prohibited the Iraqi air force from flying over northern and southern Iraq. U.S., British, and French pilots have enforced the no-fly zones. In addition, UN monitors conduct regular inspections of Iraq to prevent Saddam from acquiring nuclear weapons.

Keeping the squeeze on Iraq, however, has placed strains on U.S. foreign policy. Repeatedly, the United States has responded to Iraqi violations of UN agreements by launching air strikes or rushing additional troops to the region. Economic sanctions have not brought about Saddam's downfall. Rather, they have prompted accusations that the United States is aggravating the suffering of the Iraqi people. According to estimates by the UN, 4,500 Iraqi children die each month because of malnutrition and disease attributable to the sanctions. Such reports have fractured the unity of the Persian Gulf War coalition.

> *When you demonize an enemy, such as the president [George Bush] tended to do with Saddam Hussein, you raise expectations that you will do something about him at the end of the day.*
>
> *—General Colin Powell*
> *chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff*

U.S. steps to contain Iran have provoked stronger international criticism, largely because the United States has acted alone. In 1995, the United States prohibited Americans from trading with or investing in Iran. The sanctions cost an American energy company, Conoco, a $1 billion deal to develop Iranian oil and natural gas fields.

In 1996, the United States tried to persuade foreign countries to cut their business ties to Iran and Libya with a more restrictive set of sanctions. Under the new measure, foreign companies that invest more than $20 million annually in the energy industries of Iran or Libya would be banned from access to American markets and loans from American banks.

Most U.S. allies have criticized the sanctions and have continued to do business with Iran and Libya. A French company, for example, stepped in to fill the gap left by Conoco. U.S. officials, however, contend that the sanctions have slowed the flow of investment into Iran. They argue that Iran's government could be tamed if, in particular, Western European countries joined in squeezing Iran economically.

Political Islam

The Iranian Revolution brought to the forefront a new concern for Washington: the appeal of Islamist political movements. In almost all Middle Eastern countries, Islam is officially recognized as the binding force of society. State-run television and radio stations broadcast thousands of hours of religious programming, and Islamic clergymen receive government salaries. The Islamist regimes of Iran and Sudan, however, take a more radical approach. There, the Islamic clergy actually controls the government.

Political Islam — or Islamic fundamentalism as it is often called — strives to establish Islamic law as the foundation of government and to rid society of non-Islamic influences. Political Islam has fed off the frustration of Middle Eastern politics in the 20th century. Earlier movements, such as pan-Arab nationalism, have been branded as failures. Corruption and inefficiency have undermined popular faith in government.

Islamist movements have benefited from larger economic and social forces as well. In the 1990s, many Middle Eastern countries have adopted free-market economic principles advocated by the United States. The reforms call for breaking down trade barriers that have protected local industries, cutting government spending, and selling off state-run companies to private owners. While free-market policies have attracted increased foreign investment to the Middle East, they have also raised unemployment and reduced government assistance to the poor.

Islamic movements have proven especially strong in the poor neighborhoods of large cities. Many of their supporters are recent migrants from the countryside or the victims of economic reform. For them, Islamist movements are an answer to the seemingly reckless change and economic inequity they see around them.

U.S. officials and many Middle Eastern leaders see political Islam as a threat. In Egypt, for example, Washington has stood behind Egyptian President

Hosni Mubarak's crackdown on Islamist political movements. The situation in Algeria has been much more violent. In 1992, the Algerian military cancelled elections that were expected to bring an Islamist political party to power. Divisions within Algeria quickly sharpened, igniting a fierce civil war that has killed more than 50,000 Algerians. Since elections were held in 1995, the United States has backed the Algerian government's efforts to restore order.

In Turkey, Jordan, and Yemen, Islamist parties have been allowed to participate in the political process. In 1996, Necmettin Erbakan became Turkey's first Islamist prime minister after his Welfare Party won the largest share of the vote in parliamentary elections. Erbakan's support for religious education prompted sharp criticism from the Turkish military, bringing down his coalition in parliament. The two sides, however, agreed to give the last word to Turkey's voters.

Meanwhile, the Iranian Revolution that first set off alarm bells about political Islam has itself lost much of its fire. Since the death of Khomeini in 1989, Iran's leadership has been less eager to export its revolution abroad. Iran's military budget amounts to only one-sixth of Saudi Arabia's and one-half of Israel's. Iran has also taken steps to encourage foreign investment. The election of a moderate, Mohammed Khatami, as president in May 1997 suggests that Iranian voters want to soften the Iranian Revolution.

> *Any change in relations with the United States is dependent on changes in the policies of America toward the revolution and Iran.*
>
> *—Mohammed Khatami, president of Iran*

The record of Iran's Islamic Republic presents a contradictory picture. The clergymen who lead the country continue to meddle in the private lives of their citizens. They enforce Islamic dress codes that require women to cover themselves in public. They have also outlawed satellite dishes that had been used to pick up Iranian-language television programming beamed from California.

Most Iranians, however, are better off under the Islamic Republic than they were under the shah. Life expectancy in the country has risen from 55 years in the late 1970s to 68 years today. Schools, health clinics, roads, and safe drinking water have been brought to remote villages neglected by the shah.

Under Islamic law, the rights of women in Iran are restricted. They cannot travel abroad without the permission of their husbands and their testimony in court is worth half that of a man. Nonetheless, Iranian women as a whole have made progress since the fall of the shah and are clearly ahead of their counterparts in most of the Arab kingdoms of the Persian Gulf. For example, 40 percent of the students in Iranian universities are women, and 95 percent of girls attend primary school.

Arab-Israeli Peace Prospects

Along with the rest of the Middle East, the assumptions of the main actors in the Arab-Israeli conflict were shaken by the Persian Gulf War. The handful of long-range Iraqi missiles that struck Israel during the war reinforced the country's vulnerability. Moreover, Israelis increasingly viewed the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip as a burden on their society, especially after Palestinians launched a broad-based protest movement in 1987.

For the Palestinians, PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat's decision to back Saddam Hussein seriously backfired. The Arab kingdoms of the Persian Gulf punished Arafat by cutting off funding for the PLO. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinian workers were no longer welcome in Kuwait after the Persian Gulf War. The collapse of the Soviet Union also deprived the Palestinians of another key source of support in the international arena.

Jordan's King Hussein reluctantly backed Saddam Hussein as well, largely to avoid provoking the Palestinian community that makes up a majority of Jordan's population. After the war, the king had no choice but to mend his fences with the United States.

Syria's prestige rose as a result of the war. Syrian President Hafez al-Assad joined the international coalition against his bitter rival, Saddam Hussein. Although U.S. officials were suspicious of Assad's motives, they were eager for closer relations with

Syria to tighten the noose around Saddam.

Finally, the Persian Gulf War boosted the leverage of the United States. President Bush decided to use America's enhanced image to try once again to achieve peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors. In October 1991, he persuaded representatives of Israel, the Palestinians, Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon to sit down together in Madrid. The participants at the Madrid conference recognized that the Arab-Israeli conflict was not likely to be resolved with a single treaty. Rather, separate peace talks were initiated between Israel and each of its Arab neighbors.

Israeli-Palestinian agreements

Negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians have achieved the most significant breakthroughs. In 1993, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO Chairman Arafat shook hands on the White House lawn to seal their first agreement. In the declaration of principles they signed, Israel accepted the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people while the PLO recognized Israel's right to exist in peace and security, and renounced the use of violence. Both sides expressed their support for earlier UN resolutions, which called on Israel to withdraw from territories it had occupied in exchange for an Arab commitment to peaceful relations.

> *We hope to embark on a new era in the history of the Middle East.*
>
> *—Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin*

In 1995, Rabin and Arafat again met at the White House to sign a much more detailed treaty. The second agreement laid out a plan to extend Palestinian self-rule in the West Bank and to bring Israel's military occupation of the area to a close.

> *Peace needs courageous men. Now it is Arafat and Rabin.*
>
> *—PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat*

The treaties between Israel and the PLO have produced concrete changes. A Palestinian government, called the Palestinian Authority, largely runs day-to-day affairs in half the Gaza Strip and the main cities of the West Bank, except East Jerusalem. For the first time, Palestinians manage their own police force and elect the officials that govern them.

Many of the thorniest issues, however, have yet to be resolved by Israeli and Palestinian negotiators. Above all, the Palestinians insist on attaining full statehood. They want to control their own borders, form an army, and exercise the other rights belonging to independent nations. The Israelis fear that a full-fledged Palestinian state will endanger their security. They argue that an independent Palestine could be used as a staging ground for attacks against Israel. In fact, Israeli forces continue to exercise sole authority over two-thirds of the West Bank.

The status of Jerusalem is another sticking point. Israel claims complete control over Jerusalem and since 1980 has made the city its capital. (The United States and most other nations do not recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital.) The Palestinians, however, want to establish their capital in East Jerusalem, where they represent a majority of the population.

Like the status of Jerusalem, controversy over Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip has stirred passions. Roughly 145,000 Israelis live in the occupied territories. Most of them make their homes in modern suburbs ringing Jerusalem. Israeli construction in the area has continued despite the peace treaties. Other Israelis have settled in more remote areas, often for religious reasons. Many settlers vow that they will never accept Palestinian authority.

More than 2.2 million Palestinians live on the West Bank and Gaza Strip (an area the size of Delaware). As many as 3 million other Palestinians live scattered throughout the Arab world, mostly in Jordan. Palestinian leaders argue that all Palestinians — many of whom were forced to flee by the 1967 War — should have the right to live in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Israeli authorities have resisted opening the occupied territories to unrestricted immigration. They worry that an influx of immigrants would further inflame the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Israelis also note that more than 850,000 Palestinians live within Israel's borders.

Israeli and Palestinian negotiators are scheduled to conclude a final agreement by May 1999. Political

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developments in the region, however, have cast both the deadline and the entire peace process in doubt. In 1995, Israeli Prime Minister Rabin was gunned down by an Israeli extremist. His assassination created an opening for Benjamin Netanyahu, a strong critic of the peace process. In 1996, Netanyahu was narrowly elected prime minister.

Meanwhile, Rabin's partner in the peace process, PLO Chairman Arafat, faces challenges of his own. Many Palestinians have grown frustrated under the Palestinian Authority. Most have slipped economically in the 1990s, as the Israeli government has reduced their access to job opportunities within Israel. Corruption and mismanagement by the Palestinian Authority have further shaken the confidence of Palestinians in their leadership.

Palestinian disappointment has generated support for hard-line Islamist militants who seek to derail the peace process through terrorism. In turn, Israel has demanded that Arafat clamp down on the militants. Israeli leaders have also been quick to order air strikes against suspected guerrilla bases in Lebanon.

Both Israelis and Palestinians concede that the United States plays the pivotal role in resolving their conflict. In addition to playing host at negotiating sessions, the United States has supported the peace process through foreign aid and diplomatic pressure.

Israel has long been the leading recipient of U.S. foreign aid, taking in $3 billion a year. (Egypt ranks second with $2.1 billion a year.) Since the 1993 agreement, the United States has pledged $500 million in assistance for the Palestinians over five years. At the same time, the United States has rallied international support for the peace process.

Uneasy neighbors

While Israeli-Palestinian peace talks have grabbed most of the headlines, other dimensions of the Arab-Israeli conflict are also important. Most noteworthy has been the signing of a peace treaty between Israel and Jordan in 1994. Under the agreement, Jordan joined Egypt in officially recognizing Israel. No other Arab state has yet to formally extend diplomatic relations to Israel, although Israel has established low-level ties with Morocco, Tunisia, Oman, and Qatar.

Resolving the Israeli-Syrian dispute remains crucial to lasting peace in the Middle East. Syrian President Assad has insisted that he will sign a peace treaty only if Israel returns the Golan Heights, which has been under Israeli occupation since the 1967 War. Israeli leaders have indicated their willingness to return at least part of the Golan Heights. However, the two sides remain divided over how much of the territory should be off-limits to the Syrian military.

Peace between Lebanon and Israel hinges on progress in Israeli-Syrian negotiations. Since the 1980s, Syria and Israel have each maintained a military presence in Lebanon. Assad claims that the more than 30,000 Syrian troops stationed in the eastern part of the country have helped quell Lebanon's civil war. Israeli leaders contend that the security zone they occupy in southern Lebanon is needed to protect their country against guerrilla attacks. As recently as 1996, they mounted a large-scale bombardment of guerrilla positions in southern Lebanon that forced 500,000 Lebanese civilians to temporarily flee their homes.

U.S. perspective

The Arab-Israeli peace process has commanded a greater share of America's diplomatic energy than any other issue in recent years. At the same time, it has raised new questions about U.S.-Israeli relations.

Since its creation, Israel has occupied a special position in U.S. foreign policy. Israeli interests have been effectively promoted in the United States by the lobbying efforts of America's influential Jewish community. U.S. leaders, however, have stood by Israel for other reasons as well.

First, Israel has won admiration in the United States as a model of democracy and Western values in the Middle East. Presidents Harry Truman and Lyndon Johnson were particularly committed to Israel's struggle for survival.

Other presidents, such as Richard Nixon and George Bush, viewed Israel primarily as a strategic ally in the region. They valued Israel for countering U.S. enemies in the Middle East, battle testing U.S. weapons, and sharing intelligence information. Israel's development of nuclear weapons (which Israeli officials have never admitted) gave Israel added weight.

With the end of the Cold War and the evolution of Israel's position in the Middle East, America's attachment to Israel has attracted fresh attention. Israel's heavy-handed treatment of the Palestinians under its jurisdiction and repeated incursions into southern Lebanon have drawn more intense criticism. Under President Bill Clinton, however, U.S. support for Israel has not wavered.

Conclusion

In the coming days, you will have an opportunity to consider a range of alternatives for U.S. policy toward the Middle East. Each of the four viewpoints, or options, that you will explore in the next part of this unit is based on a distinct set of values and beliefs. Each takes a different perspective on our country's role in the world and our stake in the Middle East. You should think of the options as a tool designed to help you better understand the contrasting strategies from which Americans must craft future policy. At the end of this unit, you will be asked to make your own choices about where U.S. policy should be heading.

Options in Brief

Option 1 — Eye on the Prize

As Americans, we have no choice but to recognize our dependence on oil, and in particular on oil from the Middle East. As the events of the 1970s illustrated, a disruption in Middle Eastern oil supplies has the potential to send shockwaves throughout the global economy. In the face of such a threat, it should be clear that the flow of oil from the Middle East is vital to our country's prosperity and security. U.S. policy in the Middle East must be focused on ensuring that our country and our allies have access to the region's oil resources. Economic common sense demands that we take a more balanced approach toward the Arab-Israeli conflict. Likewise, there is no benefit in picking fights with Saddam Hussein or carrying out a crusade against imagined threats from Islamist movements.

Option 2 — Policing a Rough Neighborhood

Americans must accept that our country's strength and influence present an irresistible target for the Middle East's hate-mongers and extremists. We must also recognize that the region is too important to walk away from. There is no hope of compromise with fanatics who despise our values and our way of life. To protect our country's interests in the Middle East, the United States must draw a clear line in the sand. On one side belong our trusted friends and allies in the region. When their security is threatened, either by enemies beyond their borders or within, we should stand beside them. On the other side are the forces that have aligned themselves against peace and stability. They must be contained.

Option 3 — Promote Western Values

In the past decade, the world has changed for the better. The Middle East, however, has been a stubborn exception to the global trend. Politically, democracy has made scant headway in the region, especially in the Arab world. Basic freedoms and the rule of law count for little. Regrettably, U.S. policy has contributed to the Middle East's lack of progress. For too many years, we have put our oil interests and security concerns ahead of principle. The time has come for the United States to use its enormous influence in the Middle East to nudge the region toward reform. For the United States to bring reform to the Middle East, our policies must be seen as fair and even-handed. Change for the better is possible in the region, but only if our country leads the way.

Option 4 — Break Free of Entanglements

America's foreign policy chessmasters and armchair military strategists may have turned the Middle East into their latest field of play, but for the rest of us heightened U.S. involvement in the region is a costly, dangerous adventure. The United States must break free of our country's entanglements in the Middle East. The military presence that we have built up in recent years must be removed before we find ourselves caught up in another war. We can no longer allow our country to serve as a convenient target for anti-American extremists. Likewise, we should not be held responsible for guaranteeing peace between Arabs and Israelis. U.S. relations with the countries of the Middle East should be limited to issues that matter most to Americans.

Option 1

Eye on the Prize

Today's world runs on oil. Much of our industrialized society has been built around it. Without oil, the engines of our economy would grind to a halt. As Americans, we have no choice but to recognize our dependence on oil, and in particular on oil from the Middle East. The Middle East contains over 60 percent of the world's proven oil reserves. Saudi Arabia alone holds one-quarter of the planet's supplies. As the events of the 1970s illustrated, a disruption in Middle Eastern oil supplies has the potential to send shockwaves throughout the global economy. Not only would Americans be hit, but the economic earthquake would strike our key allies and trading partners in Western Europe and East Asia with even more devastating force. The entire international system could very well crumble. In the face of such a threat, it should be clear that the flow of oil from the Middle East is vital to our country's prosperity and security. No other issue in the Middle East rivals the importance of energy.

U.S. policy in the Middle East must be focused on ensuring that our country and our allies have access to the region's oil resources. With so much at stake, we cannot afford to lose track of our priorities. First, America's position toward the Arab-Israeli conflict must be reassessed. For too long, America's knee-jerk support of Israel has harmed our relationship with leading Arab oil-producers. Economic common sense demands that we take a more balanced approach. Likewise, there is no benefit in picking fights with Saddam Hussein or carrying out a crusade against imagined threats from Islamist movements. U.S. interests require that we maintain a military presence in the Persian Gulf, but we should be there to promote stability, not to provoke another war. Above all, we must be careful not to rock the boat in a region that is both dangerously explosive and critically important.

What policies should we pursue?

- The United States should respond quickly and firmly, using force if necessary, against countries that threaten American oil interests in the Middle East.
- The United States should maintain a military presence in the Persian Gulf sufficient to safeguard shipping lanes and to deter attacks against the main oil fields of the region.
- The United States should end economic sanctions against Iraq, Iran, and Libya and instead work to draw those nations back into the international community.
- The United States should scale back its support for Israel and take an even-handed approach to resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict.
- The United States should support the efforts of American oil companies doing business in the Middle East.
- The United States should use its economic and diplomatic leverage to prevent OPEC from again dominating the world oil market.
- The United States should maintain friendly relations with Middle Eastern governments that respect U.S. oil interests and offer our country's assistance in resolving disputes that threaten regional stability.

Option 1 is based on the following beliefs

- The free flow of oil from the Middle East is essential to the security and well-being of the United States.
- America's one-sided support for Israel has undermined our country's relationship with the Arab world and contradicts our economic interests in the Middle East.
- By showing respect and tolerance, the United States can live peacefully with the growing political influence of Islam in the Middle East.

PROS SUPPORTING ARGUMENTS

1. Ending our confrontation with Iran and Iraq will remove a needless source of tension in Middle Eastern politics and permit American businesses to compete with their European rivals on an equal footing.
2. Pursuing a more balanced policy toward the Arab-Israeli conflict will boost American prestige and influence in the Middle East and allow our country to play a more effective role in promoting regional stability.
3. Emphasizing American economic interests in our relations with the Middle East will place U.S. foreign policy on a steadier, more predictable course.

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CONS OPPOSING ARGUMENTS

1. Abandoning sanctions against Iran and Iraq will be seen throughout the Middle East as a victory for America's enemies and a defeat for the United States.
2. Ignoring the brutality and corruption of tyrannical regimes for access to oil will tarnish America's international reputation as a force for democracy and freedom.
3. Stabbing Israel in the back after decades of close cooperation will invite an Arab attack against the Israelis and lead U.S. allies worldwide to question our country's commitments.
4. Focusing our country's resources on protecting the oil supplies of the Middle East will distract us from the more important goal of developing new sources of energy here at home.
5. Treating the rulers of the oil-rich nations as a privileged class will embolden them to crack down on their opponents at home and bully their neighbors.

Option 2

Policing a Rough Neighborhood

The Persian Gulf War affirmed that the world is a dangerous place. Even with the collapse of Soviet communism, the forces opposed to our country and its interests have not disappeared. Many of them reside in the Middle East. Americans must accept that our country's strength and influence present an irresistible target for the region's hate-mongers and extremists. We must also recognize that the Middle East is too important to walk away from. At the moment, Saddam Hussein is the strongest of the aggressive tyrants that the Middle East seems to produce regularly. When he is gone, there certainly will be others. Perhaps more ominous in the long term is the spread of Islamist movements and anti-American nationalism. There is no hope of compromise with fanatics who despise our values and our way of life. America's enemies have many weapons at their disposal. The armies of Iran, Iraq, and Syria have the muscle to spread havoc in the region. Terrorists have demonstrated their ability to strike worldwide. Still more chilling is the prospect that the rogue states of the Middle East may eventually be armed with nuclear bombs.

To protect our country's interests in the Middle East, the United States must draw a clear line in the sand. On one side belong our trusted friends and allies in the region. Fortunately, there are many. Israel, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Egypt, Jordan, and most of the Persian Gulf states have been reliable partners for decades. These are countries that deserve our support and assistance. When their security is threatened, either by enemies beyond their borders or within, we should stand beside them. On the other side are the forces that have aligned themselves against peace and stability. They must be contained. Only the United States has the power and the prestige to keep the outlaw regimes of the Middle East on a tight leash. The job of policeman is not fun, but in a neighborhood as rough as the Middle East the alternative is chaos and war.

What policies should we pursue?

- The United States should build up its military forces in the Middle East to contain the aggression of Iran and Iraq.
- The United States should press our allies and trading partners worldwide to join us in imposing sanctions on Iraq, Iran, and Libya.
- The United States should use its international influence to prevent Iraq and Iran from developing nuclear and chemical weapons, or from gaining access to advanced military technology.
- The United States should work for a settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict that ensures the security of Israel while satisfying our Arab allies.
- The United States should persuade the Palestinians to give ground on issues that have raised the greatest security fears among Israeli officials, such as border control and the creation of an army.
- The United States should maintain strong alliances with our key friends in the Middle East through foreign aid and military cooperation.
- The United States should provide assistance to Middle Eastern governments that are fighting against Islamist movements.
- The United States should restrict the fund-raising and organizational activities of groups in the United States that are linked to Islamist movements in the Middle East.

Option 2 is based on the following beliefs

- There is no hope for compromise between the United States and the leaders of anti-Western Islamist and nationalist movements.
- Israel can be counted on as a strategic partner for promoting U.S. interests in the Middle East.
- Oil should not overshadow our country's many other vital interests in the Middle East.

PROS SUPPORTING ARGUMENTS

1. Guarding against Iranian and Iraqi aggression will reduce tension and promote stability in other states of the Middle East.
2. Standing by our allies and friends in the Middle East will reassure countries worldwide that the United States honors its commitments.
3. Addressing Israeli security concerns in resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict will serve as a solid foundation for lasting peace in the region.

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CONS OPPOSING ARGUMENTS

1. Carrying out a crusade against Iraq, Iran, and Libya will leave the United States isolated from the rest of the international community and cost American companies opportunities for business.
2. Branding Islamist leaders as our enemies will only provoke deeper feelings of hostility toward the United States within the Muslim world.
3. Entangling our country further in the Middle East will draw America's resources away from urgent problems here at home, such as reducing crime and improving education.
4. Continuing support for corrupt, undemocratic regimes in the Middle East will discourage democratic, free-market reform.
5. Imposing economic sanctions to achieve political goals will weaken the foundation of the international trading system.

Option 3

Promote Western Values

In the past decade, the world has changed for the better. More countries than ever have embraced democracy and economic freedom. International standards of human rights have gained widespread acceptance. State-run economic systems have given way to free markets. The Middle East, however, has been a stubborn exception to the global trend. Politically, democracy has made scant headway in the region, especially in the Arab world. Basic freedoms and the rule of law count for little. The rights of women are cruelly neglected. Economically, government officials keep a tight grip over industry and commerce. No region of the world spends a higher proportion of its wealth on weapons. Regrettably, U.S. policy has contributed to the Middle East's lack of progress. For too many years, we have put our oil interests and security concerns ahead of principle. We have looked the other way as heavy-handed rulers have abused their own people. As our experience with the shah of Iran proved, such policies inevitably come back to haunt us.

The time has come for the United States to use its enormous influence in the Middle East to nudge the region toward reform. Regimes that are both brutal and tyrannical, such as the police state of Saddam Hussein, are beyond reform. In those cases, the United States should work with democratic opposition forces to overthrow them. In other countries, the United States should encourage positive change. Governments that take steps toward establishing democratic institutions, open societies, and economic freedoms should be rewarded, while favors should be withheld from those that refuse to budge. Fortunately, the Middle East contains a few states that serve as models for the region. Israel has a solid record of democracy. Turkey's political system has overcome several setbacks. Jordan and Lebanon also appear to be moving toward greater political participation. No country, however, should be above criticism. For the United States to bring reform to the Middle East, our policies must be seen as fair and even-handed. Change for the better is possible in the region, but only if our country leads the way.

What policies should we pursue?

- The United States should use foreign aid, trade benefits, and diplomatic pressure to promote democratic, free-market reform in the Middle East.
- The United States should punish governments that abuse the rights of minority groups, violate the principles of religious tolerance, or discriminate against women.
- The United States should assist the domestic democratic opponents of Saddam Hussein and other brutal, tyrannical rulers in the Middle East.
- The United States should ensure the survival of Israel and persuade Arab states to establish peaceful relations with Israel.
- The United States should pressure Israel to end human rights abuses against the Palestinians living under Israeli jurisdiction.
- The United States should base its support for Palestinian statehood on the progress of the Palestinian Authority in promoting democracy and human rights.
- The United States should restrict arms sales to governments that use force against their own people.
- The United States should reduce its military ties with governments that refuse to take steps toward establishing democratic institutions and economic freedoms.

Option 3 is based on the following beliefs

- The advancement of democracy, tolerance, human rights, and economic freedom in the Middle East is essential to bringing peace and stability to the region.
- Without political and economic reform, the Middle East will fall further behind other regions of the world.
- The United States has the prestige and influence to nudge the governments of the Middle East toward reform.

PROS SUPPORTING ARGUMENTS

1. Promoting democracy and economic freedom in the Middle East will restore America's reputation as a nation of principle and strengthen the cause of reformers worldwide.
2. Taking a firm stand against abuses of human rights will bolster the efforts of the brave activists struggling against tyranny in the Middle East.
3. Gaining acceptance for international standards of human rights in the Middle East will serve as the basis for the resolution of disputes in the region.

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CONS OPPOSING ARGUMENTS

1. Trying to impose American values on cultures that are distinctly different from our own will only contribute to further hostility toward the United States.
2. Presenting Israel and Turkey as a model for the region — despite their record of human rights violations — will expose the United States to charges of upholding a double standard.
3. Picking fights with countries that control a large share of the world's oil reserves flies in the face of America's vital economic interests.
4. Needlessly rocking the boat in one of the most explosive regions in the world will lead to the downfall of many of our friends and allies in the Middle East.
5. Forcing Middle Eastern countries to adopt reckless economic changes will deepen poverty and play into the hands of extremists.

Option 4

Break Free of Entanglements

Since the end of the Cold War, much of our country's foreign policy attention has shifted to the Middle East. We have fought a war against Iraq and established new military bases in the Persian Gulf. We have launched a lonely crusade against the Iranian government. Moreover, our country has plunged deeper than ever into resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict. America's foreign policy chessmasters and armchair military strategists may have turned the Middle East into their latest field of play, but for the rest of us heightened U.S. involvement in the region is a costly, dangerous adventure. We have little in common with the governments and cultures of the Middle East. On the contrary, history has shown that U.S. policymakers have often misunderstood developments in the region. The Middle East's oil is certainly important to the global economy, but we should be striving to reduce our dependence on the region's energy rather than stationing aircraft carriers in the Persian Gulf or hovering over the Arab-Israeli peace process.

The United States must break free of our country's entanglements in the Middle East. The military presence that we have built up in recent years must be removed before we find ourselves caught up in another war. We can no longer allow our country to serve as a convenient target for anti-American extremists. Likewise, we should not be held responsible for guaranteeing peace between Arabs and Israelis. Ultimately, disputes in the region must be resolved by those involved, not by American diplomats. U.S. relations with the countries of the Middle East should be limited to issues that matter most to Americans. Like the nations of Western Europe and Japan, we should concentrate on doing business with the Middle East, not on meddling in local affairs. By keeping our distance, our country would be in a better position to address the many challenges we face here at home.

What policies should we pursue?

- The United States should withdraw its military forces from the Middle East and end our alliances with countries in the region.
- The United States should scale back its involvement in resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict and instead advise the countries of the region to take the initiative in pursuing the peace process.
- The United States should pursue open trade and business relations with all of the countries of the Middle East.
- The United States should repeal its economic sanctions against Iraq, Iran, and Libya.
- The United States should reduce its dependence on Middle Eastern oil by encouraging American oil companies to invest elsewhere in the world and by promoting the development of alternative energy sources, such as solar power.
- The United States should limit foreign aid in the Middle East to humanitarian crises.

Option 4 is based on the following beliefs

- Our country's expanding involvement in the Middle East has contributed to the rise of anti-American feelings in the region.
- As a region, the Middle East is no more important to America's interests than other parts of the world.
- Peace and progress in the Middle East can only come from changes within the region, not from American pressure.

PROS SUPPORTING ARGUMENTS

1. Ending the U.S. military presence in the Middle East will allow the United States to cut defense spending and invest more resources in addressing problems here at home.
2. Removing the United States from the middle of the Arab-Israeli conflict will force the nations involved to seriously pursue direct peace talks.
3. Untangling our country from the web of Middle Eastern politics will open up more opportunities for American companies to pursue business in the Middle East.

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CONS OPPOSING ARGUMENTS

1. Abandoning our policy of containing Iran and Iraq will open the door to new aggression against the oil-rich states of the Persian Gulf.
2. Withdrawing America's military from the Middle East will set off an even more dangerous arms race and increase the likelihood that nuclear weapons will spread in the region.
3. Walking away from the Arab-Israeli peace process will lead to a breakdown in negotiations and another round of fighting in the region.
4. Turning our back on the Middle East will remove one of the few forces for positive change in the region.
5. Dismantling our military presence in the Middle East will cripple the ability of America's armed forces to respond to a serious international crisis.

Focusing Your Thoughts

Instructions: You have had an opportunity to consider four options for U.S. policy toward the Middle East. Now it is your turn to look at each of the options from your own perspective. Try each one on for size. Think about how the options address your concerns and hopes. You will find that each has its own risks and trade-offs, advantages and disadvantages. After you complete this worksheet, you will be asked to develop your own option on U.S. policy toward Middle East.

Ranking the Options

Which of the options below do you prefer? Rank the options from "1" to "4," with "1" being your first choice.

___ **Option 1: Eye on the Prize**

___ **Option 2: Policing a Rough Neighborhood**

___ **Option 3: Promote Western Values**

___ **Option 4: Break Free of Entanglements**

Beliefs

Rate each of the statements below according to your personal beliefs:

1 = Strongly Support
2 = Support
3 = Oppose
4 = Strongly Oppose
5 = Undecided

___ All countries are capable of making progress toward democracy, freedom, and tolerance.

___ Meddling in the local affairs of other countries is counter-productive and dangerous.

___ Economic interests should be the driving force behind U.S. foreign policy.

___ In international relations, reliable friends and allies are America's most valuable asset.

___ The United States has a moral obligation to promote the political values and freedoms that we cherish around the world.

___ Political disputes and cultural differences should not prevent Americans from doing business with all countries.

___ The greatest threats facing the United States are all at home: budget deficits, mediocre schools, crime, and an inadequate health care system.

___ America's enemies can be contained only if we remain strong and vigilant.

Creating Your Own Option

Your next assignment is to create an option that reflects your own beliefs and opinions. You may borrow heavily from one option, or you may combine ideas from two or three options. Or you may take a new approach altogether. There are, of course, no perfect solutions. And there is no right or wrong answer. Rather, you should strive to craft an option that is logical and persuasive. Be careful of contradictions. For example, we should not launch an effort to promote democracy in the Middle East without expecting to upset our relations with the Arab kingdoms of the Persian Gulf.

Optional Reading: Middle Eastern Society through Literature

The field of literature in the Middle East has often been a political and cultural battleground. Most of the region's best-known writers have stood in opposition to their governments. Many have been imprisoned for their work. At the same time, literature has reflected the larger tensions of the region. Writers have played an important role in shaping the struggle between traditional values and Western liberalism. They have often served as a voice for the powerless and forgotten.

In this section of the background reading, you will have an opportunity to sample the work of Iranian, Israeli, Palestinian, and Turkish writers. As you read, identify the values and viewpoints that come across most strongly.

The Unwanted Woman, by Jalal Al-e Ahmad

Jalal Al-e Ahmad (1923-1969) aimed his pen largely against the rule of the Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, the shah of Iran. He was a fierce critic of the expansion of Western, particularly American, influence in Iran. At the same time, he attacked ignorance and backwardness in Iranian society.

The Unwanted Woman *is told from the perspective of Fatemeh, a 34-year-old woman. Because of her unattractive physical appearance (her face is pock-marked and her hair is thinning), Fatemeh's family was unable to find a husband for her in her youth. Instead, she has remained with her parents, venturing out of the house only a few times a month. Unexpectedly, a suitor asks her father's permission to marry her. The man himself is unattractive, with a clubfoot and thick eyeglasses. Nonetheless, Fatemeh agrees to the marriage to escape the monotony of her father's house. Her new life, however, quickly sinks into misery. Fatemeh's mother-in-law and sister-in-law treat her cruelly, and eventually turn her husband against her. In the following excerpt, Fatemeh reflects on the failure of her marriage as she flees on foot from her father's house.*

Why didn't I think? Why didn't I persuade my husband to move out? I was ready to live in a stable as long as we were alone. What a fool I was to sit with folded hands and take whatever they dished out. It was all my fault. I sat in my father's house for thirty-four years and all I learned was the way to the kitchen and the bath house. Akh, why didn't I learn to read and write? I could have saved a little every month, and like Aunt Batul, I could have bought a sewing machine by installments and done my own sewing. Our neighbor's girls learned to knit socks and, within a year, bought their own knitting machine and made enough to live on. They even made their own trousseau and it finally took ten porters to carry them off. How my brother nagged at me trying to teach me to read and write. But I'm good-for-nothing. It was all my fault.

Now I know that thinking about all this for two days was what put those evil thoughts in my head. I sat in a corner of my father's house and felt sorry for myself because I wear a wig, because I'm ugly and because I wasn't married. Are all women beautiful? Is there anything wrong with all the people who wear wigs? Am I the only one with a pocked face? It was all my fault. I just sat there and listened to all his mother and sister's abusive remarks. I let him go to them and listen to all their sarcastic and unfair remarks until his opinion of me changed. Once that had happened nothing could change it.

The last night, when he came in from his mother's room, he didn't change his clothes but stood in the doorway and said, "Wouldn't you like to go to your father's house?" My heart stopped. We had gone to his house two days ago, on Friday, and had eaten dinner there. I suddenly knew what was up. I just said. "Whatever you want," and sat quietly mending his sock. He asked again and I gave the same answer. Finally, he said, "Get up, let's go dear. Let's go see how they are." Ass that I am, I allowed myself to hope that it wasn't what I thought.

I gathered up my stuff, put on my *chador* [a long, flowing robe], and we left. On the way, neither one of

us said anything. We hadn't eaten dinner. A pot was in the fireplace. We should have taken it to his mother's room to eat. But the pot was still there when we left. My heart was vexed beyond description. It was like I knew what he wanted to do to me. But once again I put it out of my head.

Our house wasn't far. When we arrived and I knocked on the door, I had exactly the same feeling I had the day I stood behind the sitting room door and he opened it, took me by the hand and pulled me inside. Maybe I felt even worse. I was trembling from head to toe. My brother came and opened the door. As soon as my eyes fell on him it seemed I forgot all the sorrows of the world. I forgot what was happening. My brother's face showed nothing as he said hello and we went in. We walked through the hall and into the courtyard. My sister-in-law was there and mother had stuck her head out of an upstairs window to see who it was. He followed along behind.

When we reached the middle of the courtyard the bastard turned to everyone and said loudly, "This Fatemeh *Khanoum* [lady] of yours, I am returning her to you. Don't let her come back again." By the time I could scream, "Why! I won't stay. I won't let you go like this," he, lame leg and all, had bounded through the hall and closed the door behind him. As I stood there screaming, "I won't stay. I won't let you go," the tears began running down my cheeks and wouldn't stop for anything.

My poor mother was quickly by my side. She took me upstairs, all the while asking what had happened. How could I tell her that nothing had happened? Not a fight, no angry words, nothing. I finally stopped crying, I said that I had fought with them and that I had sworn at them. All lies! How could I say that nothing had happened and that the miserable son-of-a-bitch, just as easily as he had married me, had brought me back to my father's house and left. It was too late to do anything now. The miserable bastard was gone, and that was that.

The next day he went to my brother's office and told him that he had divorced me and that, when my waiting period was over, he would pay the rest of my dowry. He said to send someone to pick up all my things. You see? My mother knew that his mother and sister were the cause of everything. But how could I live in my father's house again? How could I? The two days I stayed there were exactly like being in prison. I wish I had been in prison. There, at least, one wouldn't feel wretched from seeing her mother and father and want to melt into the ground. She wouldn't feel so embarrassed by the looks of her sister-in-law. The walls of our house, which were so familiar, seemed to confine me. The domed roofs seemed to imprison me.

The Lover, by Abraham B. Yehoshua

Abraham B. Yehoshua (1936-) explores the contradictions between the idealism of early Zionism and the reality of Israeli society. His novels find drama in the everyday experiences of Israelis, probing the anxieties and tensions that have emerged since Israel's triumph in the 1967 War.

The Lover examines Israeli life in the mid-1970s from a variety of perspectives. Dafi, one of the book's main characters, is a 15-year-old student who is beginning to question the civic values of her country. Like many teenagers, she struggles to break free of the rules and expectations that are likely to define her life. Dafi expresses her rebellious spirit by challenging the authority of her parents and teachers. She also falls in love with a young Palestinian mechanic who works in her father's garage. In the following excerpt, she recalls the loss of a teacher killed during the October War of 1973.

We of class six G of Central Carmel High School lost our math teacher in the last war. Who would have guessed that he'd be the one to be killed? We didn't think of him as a great fighter. He was a little man, thin and quiet, starting to go bald. In the winter he always had a huge scarf trailing behind him. He had delicate hands and fingers that were always stained with chalk. Still he was killed. We worried rather about our P.E. teacher, who used to visit the school from time to time during the war in uniform and with his captain's

insignia, a real film start, with a real revolver that drove all the boys mad with envy. We thought it was marvelous that even during the war he found the time to come to the school, to reassure us and the lady teachers, who were wild about him. He used to stand in the playground surrounded by children and tell stories. We were really proud of him and we forgot all about our math teacher.

On the first day of the war he had ceased to exist for us, and it was days after the cease-fire that Shwartzy [the school principal] suddenly came into the classroom, called us all to our feet and said solemnly, "Children, I have terrible news for you. Our dear friend, your teacher Hayyim Nidbeh, was killed on the Golan on the second day of the war, the twelfth of *Tishri*. Let us stand in his memory."

And we all put on mournful faces and he kept us on our feet for maybe three minutes, and then he motioned with a weary gesture that we shouldn't stand, glared at us as if we were to blame and went off to call another class to its feet. I can't say that we were all that sorry at once because when a teacher dies it's impossible to be only sorry, but we really were stunned and shocked, because we remembered him living and standing beside the blackboard not so long ago, writing out the exercises with endless patience, explaining the same things a thousand times. Really it was thanks to him that I got a pretty good report last year because he never lost his temper but went over the same material again and again. For me someone only has to raise his voice or speak fast when explaining something in math to me and I go completely stupid, I can't even add two and two. He used to make me relax, which was boring, it's true, deadly boring. Sometimes we actually went to sleep during his lessons, but in the middle of all this drowsiness, in the cloud of chalk dust flying around the blackboard, the formulas used to penetrate.

And now he was himself a flying cloud.

Naturally, Shwartzy used his death for educational purposes. He forced us to write essays about him, to be put into a book which was presented to his wife at a memorial ceremony that he organized one evening. The students that he'd taught in the fifth and sixth grades sat in the back rows, in the middle the seats were left empty and in the front rows sat all the teachers and his family and friends, even the gym teacher came especially, still in his uniform and with his revolver, although the fighting had ended long ago. And I sat on the stage where I recited, with great feeling and by heart, the poems that are usual on these occasions, and between the poems Shwartzy preached a fawning and flowery sermon, talking about him as if he was some really extraordinary personage that he'd secretly admired.

And then they all went and stood beside a bronze plaque that had been put up by the entrance to the physics department. And there, too, somebody said a few words. But those we didn't hear because we slipped away down the back steps.

Shwartzy was a quick worker. In Israel they hadn't yet finished counting the dead, and he'd already got the memorials out of the way.

Wild Thorns, by Sahar Khalifeh

Sahar Khalifeh (1941-) is a keen observer of Palestinian society in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Her writing exposes the psychological wounds suffered by Palestinians living under Israeli occupation. At the same time, Khalifeh lays bare the disunity and weaknesses of her own people.

Wild Thorns tells the story of Palestinian youth growing up in the West Bank in the 1970s. The main character is Usama, who has returned home after working in the Persian Gulf as a translator. Usama has joined the Palestinian resistance movement and is committed to blowing up the buses that transport Palestinian workers to jobs in Israel. Usama, however, is torn when he learns that many of his cousins and neighbors work in Israel. Eventually, he goes forward with his mission, but both he and one of his cousins die in the attack. In the following excerpt, an exchange between two Palestinians — one a poor bread seller and the other an affluent businessman — illustrates for Usama the strains and compromises of daily life in the West Bank.

Usama strolled along the narrow muddy streets. The discordant cries of the street peddlers vying with one another assaulted his ears. Meat, fruit and vegetables; the bread seller's cart was piled high with loaves made "inside," in Israel.

"Fresh bread! Hurry up! Come and get it, folks! Hurry! Fresh bread! One pound a loaf! A loaf for a pound! Only one pound!"

An elderly man with a red fez set firmly on his head passed by. He picked up one of the long loaves, squeezed it and then put it back. The bread seller shouted, "But it's fresh, sir. I swear it's fresh!"

The man walked away, gesturing, as if to say, "Fresh indeed! You dare to sell their leftovers here!", and disappeared down an alley.

Usama watched the scene angrily. Even our bread! The idea infuriated him.

A well-dressed young man now approached the bread seller and asked in an aggressive tone, "Where's it from?"

Upset by the question, the bread seller looked around furtively to see if other potential customers nearby might have heard. "It's just bread," he said.

Sensing from the well-dressed young man's expression that an attack was imminent, he repeated defensively, "Now look, sir, this is just bread. Does even bread have a religion and a race? This is top-quality bread — it's worth its weight in gold!"

The young man picked up a loaf; it was stamped with Hebrew letters. And it was as dry as the trunk of an old olive tree.

"This bread's from inside!" he said angrily. "And it's stale too! Disgraceful."

This was clearly not the first time the bread seller had heard this. He responded to the challenge immediately. "Yes, sir, it's from inside," he agreed. "And where else would it be from? It's all from inside, sir. Everything! Why not just move on and let me try and earn my living?"

"What you're doing is a disgrace," the young man repeated disdainfully.

The repeated insult now brought an angrier, more voluble response. "A disgrace, is it? They called it disgraceful when I took a job 'inside.' So I stayed home like the women, and they called that a disgrace! And here you are in your fashionable trousers and smart shirt, all nicely pressed, telling me it's a disgrace. Look, friend, we're not the first to work with them. While we were still wandering the streets of Nablus looking for bread to eat, your kind were running around Tel Aviv looking for companies to award you franchises so you could sell their products. Isn't that true now, sir? Tell me if it's true or not."

He grabbed a loaf of bread and waved it in the young man's face, flecks of angry spittle landing on the loaves. "Well, is it true or false?" he shouted. "Answer me, in the name of our faith, answer!"

The young man was gazing at the peddler dumbfounded, his heart beating fast, his expression shocked and imbecilic. Getting a grip on himself, he suggested defensively, "Well, couldn't you sell Arab bread?"

The bread seller threw the loaf back onto the cart and began to move off, leaving the young man still holding the loaf he'd first picked up. When the cart had moved a few paces away, the young man followed, still clutching the bread, and shouted, "Hey, wait, take this back."

The peddler stretched out a hand and grabbed it. "Okay, give it here," he said fiercely. "Let someone else buy it. It's clear you're from the upper class. Give it here. Working-class people buy quietly, without making a long song and dance about it."

Civilization's Spare Part, by Aziz Nesin

Aziz Nesin (1915-1995) was one of modern Turkey's most popular writers. His novels and short stories often poked fun at the snags in Turkey's modernization process. Nesin's sharp wit frequently provoked criticism from Islamic leaders and conservative politicians.

In Civilization's Spare Part, *the main character, Hamit Agha, is a victim of the mechanization of Turkish agriculture. The short story is set in a rural coffeehouse, where Hamit Agha is explaining to his fellow villagers how the purchase of a tractor has led him to financial ruin. Hamit Agha recalls that his daughter and son-in-law, both of whom are teachers, and his son, who had learned to drive in the army, badgered him to sell his oxen and*

buy a large tractor. They argued that the tractor would do the work of ten men and save him money. Instead, the tractor suffers one mechanical problem after another. In the following excerpt, Hamit Agha recounts his history of troubles with the tractor.

The winter had set in. We pushed the tractor into the stable and tied it to the post where the oxen used to be, while a tumultuous snowstorm was sounding on the roof. Meanwhile, friends, the bank loan and the installment at the equipment office came due. We had no money.... We borrowed money to pay the first installment at the office.

We reached summer in the middle of all this. We made for the field. Just then it went bang, and crash, and stopped. What is the problem with this damned thing? No one knew. We brought out the expert from the office. Didn't he say its cogwheel was broken? "Sell us another cogwheel," we said, and he said no.

"Since this cursed thing has no cogwheel, why do you cheat us poor people?" "Well," he said, "if you buy another tractor, then you can use its cogwheel."

Look around at our neighbors' fields. It's the same story. A tractor body lies in everyone's fields. Everywhere you look are chains, tractor treads, and piles of iron....

Then, gentlemen, wouldn't you know it? The installment was due. The second notice came. For the sake of our honor, sirs, we sold another ten-*donum* [about 2.5 acres] field. A screw fell out — 500 hundred *liras* [Turkish currency]. A thousand *liras* for a part the size of your finger. A bolt come loose — 1,000 *liras*. Its chain breaks. Spare parts couldn't be found. A patch here, a patch there. That blessed tractor started to look like my trousers. While it plowed the ground, it shook all over like someone who has malaria. Everywhere in our field one can find a screw, a belt, an iron bar, a shaft, or a chain. It was as though the filthy thing had sprinkled its seeds in the field.

They said that our assemblyman whom we elected from the Democrat Party was in town. I went to him. "What will happen to us?" I asked. "Does a tractor the size of an elephant stop dead because of a part the size of a nut?..."

What could he say? He talked for a long time. I couldn't understand very much. "How did people live in the past, in the Stone Age? Now it's the Iron Age, that is to say, the age of Democrat. Civilization and the country are turning into iron," he said.

I said, "What you're saying is all very well. You brought this civilization, but where is its spare part? Come with me and look at the field. Our civilization is in pieces. It lies there like a corpse. Isn't there a smaller one than this? If this miserable thing hits something it doesn't move, if you say 'giddap' it doesn't start up, and if you say 'whoa' it doesn't slow down."...

Just then another installment notice arrived. Let me tell you something. The sighs of the oxen have affected me. How tearfully that yellow ox wept when he was sold to the market! How sorry I was!

To make a long story short, I sold every field and paid off the whole debt. Then I called to my daughter and son-in-law. I took my wife and the boy out to the wreck. "Either we repair this calamity of God's or I'll put the yoke on you, drive you like oxen, and plow the farm," I said. They worked on the engine, kicked it once, twice, tore off and reattached a strap, tightened a screw, and put something else in place of the fragile cogwheel whose bolt was loose....

Then, gentlemen, I could see that it wouldn't work. I gathered my son, daughter, son-in-law, and wife. "Come on, folks," said I, "let me show you how to repair this thing." I picked up a sledgehammer. I drove those people of mine before me like a flock of sheep. We came to the wreck. I struck the steering wheel and said, "Take that, you 20th century." I struck the engine and said, "Take that civilization." I struck the driving wheel with the sledgehammer and said, "Take that. This is your spare part." I swung the sledgehammer again and again. Suddenly I saw that my wife was shouting. "Help! My husband has gone crazy!" My daughter ran, my son-in-law ran, and my son ran the hardest. I threw away the sledgehammer and started down the road. I came straight here, gentlemen. I'm still sweating....

What a relief! I escaped from the accursed, foul thing. A thousand thanks to God. It's as though I've been born again.

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Director

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About the Choices Approach

Choices for the 21st Century curricula are designed to make complex international issues understandable and meaningful for students. Using an innovative approach to student-centered instruction, Choices units develop critical thinking and civic judgment — essential ingredients of responsible citizenship.

Understanding the Significance of History: Each Choices unit provides students with a thorough introduction to the topic under consideration. Students gain an understanding of the historical background and the status of current issues. In this way, they see how history has shaped our world. With this foundation, students are prepared to thoughtfully consider a variety of perspectives on public policy.

Exploring Policy Alternatives: Each Choices unit is built around a framework of alternative policy options that challenges students to consider multiple perspectives and to think critically about the issue at hand. Students are best able to understand and analyze the options through a cooperative learning/role-play activity. In groups, students explore their assigned options and plan short presentations. The setting of the role-play may be a Congressional hearing, meeting of the National Security Council, or an election campaign forum. Student groups defend their policy options and, in turn, are challenged with questions from their classmates. The ensuing debate demands analysis and evaluation of the many conflicting values, interests, and priorities reflected in the options.

Exercising Civic Judgment: Armed with fresh insights from the role-play and debate, students are challenged to articulate original, coherent policy options that reflect their own values, priorities, and goals as individuals and citizens. Students' views can be expressed in letters to Congress or the White House, editorials for the school or community newspaper, persuasive speeches, or visual presentations.

Why Use the Choices Approach? Choices curricula are informed by current educational research about how students learn best. Studies have consistently demonstrated that students of all abilities learn best when they are actively engaged with the material rather than listening passively to a lecture. Student-centered instructional activities motivate students and develop higher-order thinking skills. However, some high school educators find the transition from lecture format to student-centered instruction difficult. Lecture is often viewed as the most efficient way to cover the required material. Choices curricula offer teachers a flexible resource for covering course material while actively engaging students and developing skills in critical thinking, persuasive writing, and informed citizenship. The instructional activities that are central to Choices units can be valuable components in any teacher's repertoire of effective teaching strategies. Each Choices unit includes student readings, a framework of policy options, suggested lesson plans, and resources for structuring cooperative learning, role-plays, and simulations. Students are challenged to:

- recognize relationships between history and current issues
- analyze and evaluate multiple perspectives on an issue
- understand the internal logic of a viewpoint
- engage in informed debate
- identify and weigh the conflicting values represented by different points of view
- reflect upon personal values and priorities surrounding an issue
- develop and articulate original viewpoints on an issue
- communicate in written and oral presentations
- collaborate with peers

Teachers who use Choices units say the collaboration and interaction that take place are highly motivating for students. Opportunities abound for students to contribute their individual talents to the group presentations in the form of political cartoons, slogans, posters, or characterizations. These cooperative learning lessons invite students to take pride in their own contributions and the group product, enhancing students' self-esteem and confidence as learners. Choices units offer students with diverse abilities and learning styles the opportunity to contribute, collaborate, and achieve.

Note to Teachers

Western civilization has always had a unique relationship with the Middle East. The West's religious impulse and political models were sparked by contact with the region. During the Crusades, exposure to the wealth and learning of Middle Eastern cities forced Europeans to acknowledge their own backwardness. With the rise of the West in the modern era, the Middle East was seen as the antithesis of Western progress and dynamism. Today, the region continues to maintain a potent grip on our imagination. For Americans, the oil resources of the Persian Gulf, our attachment to Israel, and fears about terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction have made the Middle East an increasingly critical area of U.S. involvement.

Shifting Sands: Balancing U.S. Interests in the Middle East analyzes the mix of interests and values that have drawn America into the Middle East. At a time when U.S. commitments are being scaled back elsewhere in the world, the unit asks high school students to consider the principles and assumptions driving America's expanded presence in the Middle East.

At the core of the unit is a framework of four distinct options for U.S. policy toward the Middle East. By exploring a spectrum of alternatives, students gain a deeper understanding of the values underlying contrasting policy recommendations.

The background reading prepares students to thoughtfully consider the complexities of America's relationship with the Middle East. Part I surveys the history of our country's involvement in the Middle East up to the Persian Gulf War. Part II examines how the U.S. policy agenda in the region has changed in the wake of the Persian Gulf War. Prior to the unit, students should have a foundation in the history and geography of the Middle East, particularly with respect to the role of religion in the region, its ethnic composition, and its natural resources.

Suggested Five-Day Lesson Plan: The Teacher's Resource Book accompanying *Shifting Sands: Balancing U.S. Interests in the Middle East* contains a day-by-day lesson plan and student activities. The unit opens with a study of U.S. policy during the final weeks of the shah's rule over Iran. The second day of the lesson plan calls on students to assume the roles of key Middle Eastern leaders in evaluating America's impact on the Middle East. The third and fourth days engage students in a simulation in which they act as advocates for the four options. Finally, on the fifth day, students apply their own recommendations for U.S. policy to three hypothetical regional crises. You may also find the "Alternative Three-Day Lesson Plan" useful.

The lesson plan offered for *Shifting Sands: Balancing U.S. Interests in the Middle East* is a guide. Many teachers choose to devote additional time to certain activities. We hope that these suggestions help you in tailoring the unit to fit the needs of your classroom.

Integrating This Unit into Your Curriculum

Units produced by the Choices for the 21st Century Education Project are designed to be integrated into a variety of social studies courses. Below are a few ideas about where *Shifting Sands: Balancing U.S. Interests in the Middle East* might fit into your curriculum.

The Geopolitics of Oil: For the countries of the industrialized world, national security has long been synonymous with access to oil. Many of the 20th century's wars and alliances have revolved around the contest for oil. Government officials, corporate executives, and military leaders have fixated on its significance. Since World War II, the importance of oil has transformed the Persian Gulf into one of the world's most strategically prized regions. *Shifting Sands: Balancing U.S. Interests in the Middle East* allows students to step back from our era's obsession with oil and take a broader look at its role in geopolitics. The subject carries added weight as alternative energy sources emerge and concern mounts about the impact of fossil fuels on the global environment.

Decline of the Ottoman Empire: Many of the forces that have shaped the modern Middle East were in fact unleashed during the last decades of the Ottoman empire. Nationalism, which entered the empire through the Balkans, eventually recast Turkish and Arab identity. The failure of Ottoman reformers to establish the rule of law and basic human rights doomed later efforts to introduce liberal, Western political models in the Middle East. The genocide of the empire's Armenian and Assyrian communities during World War I foreshadowed today's violent repression of the Kurds, Bahais, and other minorities. Finally, the emergence of pan-Islamism as a political factor in the Ottoman empire influenced the direction of the Islamist movements that were to follow.

Islam and the West: With the collapse of Soviet communism, many international observers have elevated Islam to the status of a global menace. A few scholars, most notably Samuel Huntington, have suggested the civilizations of the West and the Islamic world are locked in fundamental conflict. Political leaders on both sides of the cultural divide have fanned the flames of tensions. At the same time, moderate voices have stepped up their efforts to promote reconciliation and mutual understanding. *Shifting Sands: Balancing U.S. Interests in the Middle East* provides students a starting point for studying the relationship between the West and the Islamic Middle East.

Superpower Rivalry: The Middle East served as the setting for many of the Cold War's most intriguing dramas. The 1967 Six-Day War and, in particular, the 1973 October War were largely a contest between American and Soviet weaponry. The competition for allies in the region fueled an arms race that continues today. In addition, many of the Middle East's most prominent political figures — such as Gamal Abd al-Nasser and Saddam Hussein — built their careers by turning the superpower rivalry to their advantage. *Shifting Sands: Balancing U.S. Interests in the Middle East* gives students an opportunity to re-examine U.S. efforts to counter Soviet influence in the Middle East. Special emphasis may be placed on exploring alternatives to America's Cold War strategy in the region.

Waging the Cold War in the Middle East

Objectives:

Students will:

- Identify America's interests in the Middle East during the Cold War.
- Analyze the significance of U.S. ties to the shah of Iran.
- Interpret the historical lessons raised by the fall of the shah.

Required Reading:

Before beginning the unit, students should have read Part I of the background reading (pages 1-12 of the student text) and completed "Study Guide — Part I" (page 4 of the teacher's guide).

Suggestions:

Because Part I of the background reading is both lengthy and challenging, consider giving students more than one night to complete it. "Organizational Chart — Part I" (page 6 of the teacher's guide) has been included to help students identify the main elements of U.S. involvement in Middle East.

Handouts:

- "The Fall of the Shah" (page 7-8 of the teacher's guide).

In the Classroom:

1. Identifying U.S. Interests — Ask students to identify and assess the interests that defined U.S. policy toward the Middle East during the Cold War. For example, how did U.S. interests in the Persian Gulf region differ from those regarding Israeli security? What were the concerns and values underlying U.S. policy? Why did the Middle East become a flashpoint of superpower rivalry?

2. Crisis in Context — Distribute "The Fall of the Shah." Explain that the 1979 Iranian revolution was the leading setback for U.S. policy in the Middle East during the Cold War. Ask students to summarize the significance of America's alliance with the shah for our country's overall role in the Middle East. Why was the overthrow of the shah seen as a rejection of Westernization? Review the introduction to "The Fall of the Shah," emphasizing that Ambassador Sullivan's intent was to prompt a discussion of U.S. policy toward Iran within the Carter administration.

3. "Thinking the Unthinkable" — Instruct students to read the summary of Sullivan's cable and to review the "Questions for consideration." Invite students to summarize Sullivan's assessment and recommendations. Note that the ambassador's principle fear was that an Islamist revolution would be a steppingstone to a communist takeover of Iran. What was Sullivan's view of the Islamist movement led by Ayatollah Khomeini? Why had Sullivan lost confidence in the shah's ability to hold on to power?

4. Historical Lessons — Call on students to evaluate the validity of Sullivan's assumptions. Was the ambassador's assessment of the Islamist movement correct? Should the United States have stood more firmly behind the shah or reached out earlier to establish ties with the Islamist movement? What lessons should be drawn from the fall of the shah? Note that Sullivan's cable awakened Carter to the possibility that the shah's regime might collapse. In response, the president fired off notes to his top foreign policy advisers, criticizing them for not keeping him better informed about the unrest in Iran. Carter, however, did little to change U.S. policy. Rather, the Carter administration continued to publicly express U.S. support for the shah until he fled Iran in mid-January 1979.

Homework:

Students should read Part II of the background reading (pages 13-22 of the student text) and complete "Study Guide — Part II" (page 10 of the teacher's guide).

Name:

Study Guide — Part I

America's Role in the Middle East

1. Explain how the Persian Gulf War and the Arab-Israeli peace process have led to an expansion of U.S. involvement in the Middle East.

2. How did the Ottoman empire's relationship with the West change from the 1500s to the 1800s?

3. How did World War I and the peace conference that followed shape the "outlines of today's Middle East"?

4. Why did World War II prompt U.S. leaders to pay greater attention to the oil resources of the Persian Gulf region?

5. Why did the Cold War elevate the importance of Saudi Arabia in U.S. foreign policy?

6. Why did the Zionist movement lay the basis for conflict in the Middle East and contribute to the rise of Arab nationalism?

7. What were the most important changes resulting from Israel's victory in the Six-Day War?

8. Why did the Arab states aim the "oil weapon" specifically at the United States? What was the economic impact of the 1973 oil crisis?

9. How did the October War pave the way to the Camp David accords? What was America's role in bringing about the peace settlement?

10. Why was the Islamist revolution in Iran seen as a serious setback for U.S. interests in the Middle East?

11. Why did the Iran-Iraq War fail to trigger a lasting crisis in the world oil market?

Name:

Organizational Chart — Part I

America's Role in the Middle East

Instructions: During much of the 20th century, U.S. involvement in the Middle East revolved around oil, Israel, and containing the Soviet Union. Your assignment is to organize the key events featured in Part I of the background reading under these three headings. As you will see, the dates running down the left side of the worksheet match the three main divisions of the background reading.

	OIL	ISRAEL	CONTAINING THE SOVIET UNION
1914-1945 (Land of the Bible)			(Not applicable)
1946-1973 (America's Superpower Role)			
1974-1989 (Winds of Change)			

The Fall of the Shah

Introduction: In the 1970s, the shah of Iran, Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, was our country's most important ally in the Persian Gulf region. As the world's second-leading oil exporter, the shah dreamed of transforming his country into a great power. Both the shah and U.S. policymakers, however, misjudged the resentment and turmoil that was sparked by Iran's sudden wealth and the shah's efforts to modernize his country. By late 1978, Muslim religious leaders had mounted a broad-based protest movement that threatened to bring down the shah.

The excerpt* below captures a decisive moment in U.S. policy toward Iran. It was written by William Sullivan, the U.S. ambassador to Iran from 1977 to 1979. In the excerpt, Sullivan summarizes a cable he directed to top U.S. policymakers in Washington on November 9, 1978. Five days earlier, the shah had named General Gholem Reza Azhari, chief of staff of the Iranian armed forces, to head a military government. Much of Iran was paralyzed by labor strikes and demonstrations. In the United States, the administration of President Jimmy Carter was caught off-guard by the challenge to the shah. Sullivan's cable was intended to present a realistic picture of the situation in Iran and offer recommendations for U.S. policy. As you read the excerpt, identify the key arguments of Sullivan's assessment.

Cable to Washington — November 9, 1978

The setting

Shortly after General Azhari had taken office as prime minister, I reached the conclusion that his military government, in effect, represented the shah's last chance for survival. If it failed to restore law and order and if it did not succeed in resuming the industrial production in the country, the success of the [Islamist] revolution, I felt, was inevitable and we should face the consequences of that fact. On November 9, 1978, I wrote a cable setting forth some of those fundamental considerations and making recommendations for our future policy.

Assessing the situation

In that cable, which I entitled "Thinking the Unthinkable," I restated some fundamental cliches about Iran and examined how they were changing. For example, I pointed out the conventional wisdom that stability in Iran rested on two pillars — the monarchy and the Shi'a [the branch of Islam most widely followed in Iran] religion. I noted that, for the preceding fifteen years, the religious pillar had been largely subordinate to the monarchic. The changes in the vitality of the religious side were manifest, but it was necessary to examine what was happening on the monarchic side.

There, it was clear that the shah's public support had shrunk dramatically. His only real strength came from the military....

However, I went on, even that relationship had changed with the installation of a military government. It had been converted into a situation that reflected the strength of the military — "which currently supports the shah." I felt that these altered circumstances required us to examine the relationship, both actual and potential, between the military and the religious.

In this examination, I argued that the relationship would be determined by the success that the Azhari government would have in breaking the religious grip over the economy that was manifested by the strikes and civil-disobedience campaigns they [the Islamist leaders] were directing. I felt that, even if the military succeeded, the results would be a continuation of tension and an increase in terrorism.

If on the other hand, the military failed to dominate the religious, then we should, I thought, examine the consequences for United States interests that might result from an accommodation between the two institutions....

*Excerpted from *Mission to Iran*, by William H. Sullivan.

Name:

U.S. policy options

In these lines, I posited a situation in which not only the shah but most of the senior Iranian military officers would leave the country. Understandings about the nature of a successor regime would be reached between the religious leader and the new, younger military leadership. In such understandings, Ayatollah Khomeini would have to choose a government headed by moderate figures.... Arrangements would have to be made for an orderly series of elections to produce a constituent assembly, a new constitution, and eventually a parliament.

My assumption was that the religious leadership, including Khomeini, might accept such an arrangement because it would have given them their essential objective — the elimination of the shah — avoided a bloodbath, and endowed them with armed forces willing to maintain law and order on behalf of the new regime.

From our point of view, it would be satisfactory because it would avoid chaos, ensure the continued integrity of the country, preclude a radical leadership, and effectively block Soviet domination of the Persian Gulf. In these circumstances, the major losses, as I saw them, would be a reduction in the intimacy of our military and security relations, a shift on Iran's part from a pro-Israeli to an anti-Zionist position, and a certain aloofness in our overall dealings.

Questions for consideration

1. According to Ambassador Sullivan, what were the two most important "pillars" of the Iranian political system?

2. Why did Sullivan believe that the relationship between Iran's military and religious leaders was the key factor in the country's crisis?

3. Why did Sullivan suggest that the United States should consider ending its support of the shah?

4. According to Sullivan, how would U.S. interests in Iran be harmed by the fall of the shah?

Views from the Middle East

Objectives:

Students will:

- Analyze the U.S. role in the Middle East from a Middle Eastern perspective.
- Explore the goals and concerns of prominent Middle Eastern leaders.
- Collaborate with classmates to develop a group presentation.

Suggestions:

If time permits, this lesson may be done over two class periods.

Required Reading:

Students should have read Part II of the background reading (pages 13-22 of the student text) and completed "Study Guide — Part II" (page 10 of the teacher's guide).

Handouts:

- "Middle East Summit — Profiles of the Leaders" (pages 11-13 of the teacher's guide) to appropriate small groups.
- "Middle East Summit — Organizing Your Presentation" (page 14 of the teacher's guide).
- "Middle East Summit — Evaluation Form" (optional — page 15 of the teacher's guide).

In the Classroom:

1. Review — Call on students to review Part II of the background reading to explain how the U.S. role in the Middle East has changed since the Persian Gulf War. What are America's most important connections to the region? Which issues have dominated the U.S. policy agenda?

2. Defining Roles — Divide the class into seven groups. Assign each group the responsibility of representing one of the seven Middle East leaders featured in "Middle East Summit — Profiles of the Leaders." Distribute the appropriate section of "Middle East Summit — Profiles of the Leaders" to each group. Distribute "Middle East Summit — Organizing Your Presentation" to all seven groups. Explain that the groups will take part in a summit of Middle Eastern leaders to evaluate the U.S. role in the region. Emphasize that each group must faithfully reflect the views of the leader it has been assigned. After the groups read the profiles of their leaders, they should answer the questions in "Middle East Summit — Organizing Your Presentation."

3. Comparing Perspectives — Once the groups have completed their preparations, call on group spokespersons to deliver their presentations. ("Middle East Summit — Evaluation Form" is designed to enable students to record the main points of the presentations.) Encourage the groups to analyze other presentations. For example, how does the perspective of King Fahd differ from that of Ayatollah Khamenei? How do domestic political factors influence the views of Hosni Mubarak or Hafez al-Assad? Which leaders favor a high level of U.S. involvement in the Middle East? Which leaders want the United States to withdraw from the region? How should the viewpoints emerging from the simulation affect U.S. policy toward the region?

4. Regional Politics — Note that a meeting of the seven countries represented in the simulation has never taken place and is unlikely to occur in the foreseeable future. Call on students to identify the ideological, cultural, religious, economic, and personal factors that contribute to the Middle East's web of rivalries and alliances. For example, why have Turkey and Israel developed closer ties in recent years? What accounts for the enmity between Syria and Iraq? How has U.S. involvement shaped Middle Eastern politics?

Name:

Study Guide — Part II

Weighing U.S. Priorities in the Middle East

1. What were the main considerations behind President Bush's decision to go to war against Iraq in January 1991? How did changes in international relations influence his response to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait?

2. What are the prospects for another oil crisis in the coming years?

3. Why has America's growing military presence in the Middle East generated controversy among both Arabs and Americans?

4. How has the United States sought to contain the influence of Iran and Iraq? What have been the main drawbacks of America's strategy?

5. What factors have contributed to the appeal of political Islam? Are Islamist movements likely to make further gains in the Middle East? (Explain your answer.)

6. How did the Persian Gulf War open the door to resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict?

7. What are the main obstacles to achieving a peace settlement between Israel and the Palestinians?

Middle East Summit — Profiles of the Leaders

Saddam Hussein — President of Iraq

Born in 1937, you joined the nationalist *Ba'ath* (Renaissance) Party as a young man. After participating in a failed assassination attempt against the Iraqi prime minister, you were forced to flee to Egypt, where you attended law school. You returned to Iraq in 1963 after the *Ba'athists* took power, but a few months later were imprisoned when the new regime was overthrown. After escaping prison, you helped lead another coup that restored the *Ba'ath* Party to power in 1968. By 1979, you had concentrated state power in your hands. An extensive secret police network helped you stamp out opposition. In foreign policy, you sought to establish yourself as the leader of the Arab world. In 1980, you invaded Iran to take advantage of the chaos caused by Iran's Islamist revolution. The war dragged on for eight years and undermined your plans for economic development. Nonetheless, you continued to build up the Iraqi army. In 1990, you overran your oil-rich neighbor, Kuwait. The international response, led by the United States, caught you by surprise. You refused to withdraw from Kuwait, however, and in early 1991 suffered a devastating military defeat in the Persian Gulf War. In the weeks following the conflict, you rallied the remainder of your army to put down uprisings by Kurds and Shi'ites. UN economic sanctions continue to weigh heavily on your country. You hope that divisions within the international community will eventually cause the UN to lift the sanctions.

Country Profile	
Population:	21 mil.
GDP:	$41 bil.
Per capita GDP:	$2,000
Value of exports:	?
Main exports:	Oil, fertilizer
Troop strength:	383,000

Suleyman Demirel — President of Turkey

Born in 1924, you were educated as an engineer. In 1961, you entered politics with your election to the National Assembly. Four years later, you became the youngest prime minister in Turkey's history as head of the Justice Party. Since then, you have been a dominant figure in Turkish politics, serving as prime minister seven times. You have supported close ties with Turkey's allies in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), especially with the United States. U.S. military aid to your country has helped you build one of the strongest armies in the Middle East. However, your relationship with Turkey's powerful military has often been difficult. In 1980, the military overthrew your government and banned you from participating in politics. Nonetheless, you came back to serve as prime minister in 1991, and in 1993 you were elected president. As president, you have sought to preserve Turkey's links with the West while maintaining stability at home. You are hopeful that Turkey will eventually be allowed to join the European Union trade bloc. The emergence of Necmettin Erbakan, the head of the Islamist Welfare Party, as prime minister has deepened the divisions within your country. Erbakan has criticized Turkey's focus on the West and new military ties to Israel. Instead, he has called for Turkey to move closer to the Islamic world. You have been caught in the middle between Erbakan's opponents in the army and the will of Turkey's voters. Meanwhile, you have launched another offensive against Kurdish guerrillas in Turkey's southeast.

Country Profile	
Population:	62 mil.
GDP:	$348 bil.
Per capita GDP:	$5,500
Value of exports:	$21 bil.
Main exports:	Textiles, steel
Troop strength:	508,000

Benjamin Netanyahu — Prime Minister of Israel

Born in 1949, you attended high school in the United States and then served in an elite Israeli commando unit. In 1976, your brother was killed rescuing the passengers of an airliner hijacked by Palestinian guerrillas. You entered government service in 1982 as a diplomat. In 1988, you were named deputy minister of foreign affairs under the conservative *Likud* Party administration of Yitzhak Shamir. After the *Likud* Party's defeat in 1992 elections, you emerged as leader of the party. In 1996, you led *Likud* to a narrow victory over the Labor Party. Your campaign emphasized the need to protect Israeli security. As prime minister, you have pledged to honor the agreements with the Palestinians signed by the Labor Party government. However, you question the wisdom of trading land for Arab promises of peace. Under your leadership, the peace process has stalled. Israel continues to be a close ally of the United States, receiving $3 billion annually in foreign aid, but your relations with Washington have often been strained by your tough stance.

Country Profile	
Population:	5.4 mil.
GDP:	$80 bil.
Per capita GDP:	$15,500
Value of exports:	$28 bil.
Main exports:	Machinery, cut diamonds
Troop strength:	172,000

Fahd — King of Saudi Arabia

Born in 1923, the son of King Ibn Saud, you grew up surrounded by privilege and wealth. In 1953, you were appointed education minister and established a system of public education for your country. Over the next two decades, you established a reputation as a practical-minded modernizer. With the accession of King Khalid to the Saudi throne in 1975, you were given broad control over Saudi Arabia's economic and foreign policies. Since 1982, you have served as king. Under your leadership, Saudi Arabia's economy has been largely managed by Western-educated specialists. In foreign policy, you have favored close relations with the United States. During the Persian Gulf War, you lent critical military, political, and financial support to the campaign against Iraq. Although Saudi Arabia is the world's largest oil exporter, your country's soaring population growth and rising defense spending have strained the Saudi budget. At home, Islamist leaders have increasingly criticized your ties to the West and the corruption of the royal clan. Beyond your borders, you view Iraq and Iran as dangerous threats to Saudi security.

Country Profile	
Population:	19 mil.
GDP:	$189 bil.
Per capita GDP:	$10,100
Value of exports:	$42 bil.
Main exports:	Oil
Troop strength:	106,000

Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamanei — Spiritual Leader of Iran

Born in 1939, you began pursuing religious studies as a teenager. In 1958, you became a follower of the Ayatollah Rohollah Khomeini and joined the Islamist movement opposing the shah's modernization program. During the 1960s and 1970s, you were repeatedly imprisoned for plotting to overthrow the shah. With the triumph of the Islamist revolution in 1979, Khomeini appointed you to the Council of the Islamic Revolution. After barely surviving a terrorist bombing attack in 1981 against the ruling Islamic Republic Party, you were elected president by a large majority. In 1989, you were chosen supreme spiritual leader following the death of Khomeini. Your position makes you the most powerful political figure in Iran, with the authority to overrule government decisions. Since 1989, you have often butted heads with presidents Hashemi Rafsanjani and Mohammed Khatami. As a conservative, you oppose their efforts to expand economic ties with the West and ease Islamic social restrictions.

Country Profile	
Population:	66 mil.
GDP:	$324 bil.
Per capita GDP:	$4,700
Value of exports:	$16 bil.
Main exports:	Oil, carpets
Troop strength:	513,000

Hosni Mubarak — President of Egypt

Born in 1928, you were trained as a military pilot and are credited with the impressive performance of the Egyptian air force in the opening days of the October War against Israel in 1973. President Anwar al-Sadat promoted you to the top rank of the air force in 1974 and in 1975 named you vice-president. You became president after Sadat's assassination in 1981. Under your presidency, Egypt has ended its isolation from the rest of the Arab world. Compared to Sadat, you have been quicker to criticize Israel. During the Persian Gulf War, Egypt was a key ally in the U.S. coalition against Iraq. Since the war, you have helped broker agreements between Israel and the Palestinians. The United States views you as an important source of peace and stability in the region. Egypt ranks as the second-leading recipient of American foreign aid, amounting to $2.1 billion a year. Your close ties with the United States, however, have sparked a backlash at home. An Islamist movement has gained strength in recent years, staging dramatic terrorist acts that have harmed Egypt's tourism industry. You insist that Egypt is not ready for democracy and have responded to the Islamist threat by cracking down against a broad range of opponents.

Country Profile	
Population:	64 mil.
GDP:	$171 bil.
Per capita GDP:	$2,760
Value of exports:	$5.4 bil.
Main exports:	Oil, cotton
Troop strength:	436,000

Hafez al-Assad — President of Syria

Born in 1930, you are a member of the Alawite Islamic sect. As a teenager, you joined the nationalist *Ba'ath* Party. Trained as an air force pilot, you were among a group of *Ba'athist* military officers which took power in Syria in 1963. In 1966, you took part in another coup that led to your appointment as defense minister. Under your leadership, Syria's armed forces lost the Golan Heights to Israel in the Six-Day War of 1967. In 1970, you seized control of the country on your own. With Soviet assistance, you strengthened Syria's military. At home, you ruthlessly smashed opposition to your regime and appointed your fellow Alawites to many of the key positions in your government. During the Lebanese civil war, you established Syrian control over much of eastern Lebanon. You contend that Syria's presence is needed to maintain Lebanon's stability. Until the Persian Gulf War, U.S. policymakers viewed your regime as a sponsor of terrorism and a threat to peace. Your participation in the coalition against Iraq, however, resulted in new ties between Syria and the United States. At America's urging, you have entered peace negotiations with Israel. You insist that Israel must give up control of the Golan Heights before Syria will agree to peace.

Country Profile	
Population:	16 mil.
GDP:	$91 bil.
Per capita GDP:	$5,900
Value of exports:	$3.5 bil.
Main exports:	Oil, cotton
Troop strength:	423,000

Name:

Middle East Summit — Organizing Your Presentation

Instructions: Your group has been called on to represent one of seven Middle Eastern leaders at a regional summit. The summit will consider the role of the United States in the Middle East. Your group should organize a three-to-five minute presentation from the perspective of the leader you have been assigned. Answering the questions below will help you develop your presentation. You should also review the background reading to gain a deeper insight into the challenges confronting your leader.

1. From the perspective of the leader you represent, how has U.S. involvement in the Middle East since World War II affected the region?

2. Summarize your country's current relationship with the United States. How has it changed since the Persian Gulf War?

3. What are the most important issues currently facing your government?

4. What changes would you like to see in U.S. policy toward the Middle East?

Middle East Summit — Evaluation Form

Instructions: Use this worksheet to record the main points of the group presentations.

1. Summarize the attitudes of the Middle Eastern leaders toward the United States.

Saddam Hussein

Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamanei

Suleyman Demirel

Hosni Mubarak

Benjamin Netanyahu

Hafez al-Assad

King Fahd

2. Summarize the main domestic concerns of the Middle Eastern leaders.

Saddam Hussein

Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamanei

Suleyman Demirel

Hosni Mubarak

Benjamin Netanyahu

Hafez al-Assad

King Fahd

Middle Eastern Literature

Objectives:

Students will:

- Assess the interplay among literature, politics, and culture in the Middle East.
- Analyze the political content of selections from modern Middle Eastern fiction.
- Articulate the values and attitudes of fictional characters.

Required Reading:

Students should have read "Middle Eastern Society through Literature" (pages 33-37 of the student text) and completed "Study Guide — Optional Reading" (page 17 of teacher's guide).

In the Classroom:

1. Cultural Comparisons — Call on students to share their impressions of the excerpts they read. Where they able to empathize with the concerns and hopes of the main characters? Are the settings and plots comprehensible for American readers? How do the styles and themes of the excerpts compare to those of American fiction?

2. Probing for Political Meaning — Emphasize that literature in the modern Middle East is often a vehicle for political expression. Call on students to extract the political meaning of the excerpts they read. For example, how do Al-e Ahmad's feelings about the place of women in Iranian society come across in *The Unwanted Woman*? What is Yehoshua's view of the direction of Israel's development?

3. Exploring Viewpoints — Form groups of three or four students. Assign each group one of the four main characters featured in the optional reading (i.e., Fatemeh, Dafi, Usama, or Hamit Agha). Call on the groups to write a brief monologue from the perspective of their assigned characters. They should focus on the attitudes of their characters toward their respective societies. Suggest that students concentrate on current controversies. For example, what is Fatemeh's opinion of Iran's Islamist revolution? How does Dafi feel about the prospects for peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors?

4. Promoting Dialogue — Ask the groups to present their monologues to the class. Encourage dialogue among the characters. For example, how do the contradictions in Palestinian society apparent to Usama compare to those observed by Dafi regarding Israeli society? How do the expectations and concerns of Hamit Agha differ from those of Fatemeh? What attitudes do the characters share?

Study Guide — Optional Reading

Middle Eastern Society through Literature

1. Why does Fatemeh hold such a bleak view of her future? What course is her life likely to take after her divorce?

2. What is the attitude of Dafi toward her math teacher's death? How has her school's emphasis on patriotism influenced her outlook?

3. Why does the exchange between the bread seller and the affluent businessman illustrate the contradictions facing Palestinians living under Israeli occupation? Why is Usama especially troubled by the confrontation?

4. What does the breakdown of the tractor in *Civilization's Spare Part* say about Turkey's modernization effort? What does the future likely hold for Hamit Agha and his fellow small farmers?

5. Which of the four excerpts gave you the most insight into Middle Eastern society? Explain your reasoning.

Role Playing the Four Options: Organization and Preparation

Objectives:

Students will:

- Analyze the issues that frame the current debate on U.S. policy toward the Middle East.
- Identify the core underlying values of the options.
- Integrate the arguments and beliefs of the options and the background reading into a persuasive, coherent presentation.
- Work cooperatively within groups to organize effective presentations.

Handouts:

- "Presenting Your Option" (page 19 of the teacher's guide) for option groups.
- "Expressing Key Values" (page 20 of the teacher's guide) for option groups.
- "Committee on Foreign Relations of the U.S. Senate" (page 21 of the teacher's guide) for committee members.

In the Classroom:

1. Planning for Group Work — In order to save time in the classroom, form student groups before beginning Day Three. During the class period of Day Three, students will be preparing for the Day Four simulation. Remind them to incorporate the background reading into the development of their presentations and questions.

2a. Option Groups — Form four groups of four students. Assign an option to each group. Distribute "Presenting Your Option" and "Expressing Key Values" to the four option groups. Inform students that each option group will be called on in Day Four to present the case for its assigned option to members of the Committee on Foreign Relations of the U.S. Senate. Explain that option groups should follow the instructions in "Presenting Your Option." Note that the option groups should begin by assigning each member a role.

2b. Committee Members — The remainder of the class will serve as members of the Committee on Foreign Relations of the U.S. Senate. Distribute "Committee on Foreign Relations of the U.S. Senate" to each committee member. While the option groups are preparing their presentations, members of the Committee on Foreign Relations should develop cross-examination questions for Day Four. (See "Committee on Foreign Relations of the U.S. Senate.") Remind committee members that they are expected to turn in their questions at the end of the simulation.

Suggestions:

In smaller classes, other teachers or administrators may be invited to serve as members of the committee. In larger classes, additional roles — such as those of newspaper reporter, lobbyist, or political consultant — may be assigned to students.

Extra Challenge:

Ask the option groups to design a poster or a political cartoon illustrating the best case for their options.

Homework:

Students should complete preparations for the simulation.

Presenting Your Option

Preparing Your Presentation

Your Assignment: Your group has been called on to appear before the Committee on Foreign Relations of the U.S. Senate. Your assignment is to persuade the committee members that your option should be the basis for U.S. policy toward the Middle East. You will be evaluated on how well you present your option.

Organizing Your Group: Each member of your group will take a specific role. Below is a brief explanation of the responsibilities for each role.

1. *Spokesperson:* Your job is to explain the option of your group to the Committee on Foreign Relations in a three-to-five minute presentation. In preparing your presentation, you will receive help from the other members of your group. You should include arguments from their areas of expertise. Keep in mind, though, that you are expected to take the lead in organizing your group. Read your option and review the background reading to build a strong case for your option. The "Expressing Key Values" worksheet will help you organize your thoughts.

2. *U.S. Foreign Policy Adviser:* Your job is to advise the spokesperson of your group on why your option best serves the foreign policy goals and interests of the United States. Carefully read your option, and then review Part II of the background reading. Make sure that your area of expertise is reflected in the presentation of your group spokesperson. The "Expressing Key Values" worksheet will help you organize your thoughts.

3. *Arab-Israeli Conflict Specialist:* Your job is to advise the spokesperson of your group on why your option best serves U.S. interests regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict. Carefully read your option, and then review the background reading. Pay close attention to the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the peace process that began after the Persian Gulf War. Make sure that your area of expertise is reflected in the presentation of your group spokesperson. The "Expressing Key Values" worksheet will help you organize your thoughts.

4. *Persian Gulf Specialist:* Your job is to advise the spokesperson of your group on why your option best serves U.S. interests in the Persian Gulf. Carefully read your option, and then review the background reading. Pay close attention to the history of U.S. involvement in the Persian Gulf and the impact of the Persian Gulf War on the region. Make sure that your area of expertise is reflected in the presentation of your group spokesperson. The "Expressing Key Values" worksheet will help you organize your thoughts.

Making Your Case

After your preparations are completed, your spokesperson will deliver a three-to-five minute presentation to the Committee on Foreign Relations. The "Expressing Key Values" worksheet and other notes may be used, but the spokesperson should speak clearly and convincingly. During the presentations, you should try to identify the weak points of the competing options. After all of the groups have presented their options, members of the Senate committee will ask you cross-examination questions. Any member of your group may respond during the cross-examination period.

Name:

Expressing Key Values

The notion of values lies at the core of this unit. Each of the four options in this unit revolves around a distinct set of values. The opening two paragraphs of your option are devoted to making a convincing case for the values that are represented. The term "values," however, is not easy to define. Most often, we think of values in connection with our personal lives. Our attitudes toward our families, friends, and communities are a reflection of our personal values.

Values play a critical role in our civic life as well. In the United States, our country's political system and foreign policy have been shaped by a wide range of values. The high value many Americans place on freedom, democracy, and individual liberty rings loudly throughout U.S. history. For most of our country's existence, the impulse to spread American values beyond our borders was outweighed by the desire to remain independent of foreign entanglements. Since World War II, however, the United States has played a larger role in world affairs than any other nation. At times, American leaders have emphasized the values of human rights and cooperation. On other occasions, the values of stability and security have been stressed.

Some values fit together well. Others are in conflict. Americans are constantly being forced to choose among competing values in our ongoing debate about foreign policy. Your job is to identify and explain the most important values underlying your option. These values should be clearly expressed by every member of your group. This worksheet will help you organize your thoughts.

1. What are the two most important values underlying your option?

   a.

   b.

2. According to the values of your option, what should be the role of the United States in the world?

3. Why should the values of your option be the guiding force for U.S. policy toward the Middle East?

Committee on Foreign Relations of the U.S. Senate

Hearing on U.S. Policy toward the Middle East

Your Role

As a member of the Committee on Foreign Relations of the U.S. Senate, you consider issues relating to our country's foreign policy. As you know, the Middle East has occupied an important place on the U.S. foreign policy agenda for over half a century. Since the end of the Cold War, the region has attracted increased attention, even as America has scaled back its involvement in other parts of the world. These hearings will introduce you to four distinct approaches to U.S. policy toward the Middle East.

Your Assignment

While the four option groups are organizing their presentations, you should prepare two questions regarding each of the options. Your teacher will collect these questions at the end of Day Four.

Your questions should be challenging and critical. For example, a good question for Option 1 might be:

> *Will focusing on America's oil interests in the Middle East tarnish our country's international reputation for leadership?*

On Day Four, the four option groups will present their positions. After their presentations are completed, your teacher will call on you and your fellow committee members to ask questions. The "Evaluation Form" you receive is designed for you to record your impressions of the option groups. Part I should be filled out in class after the option groups make their presentations. Part II should be completed as homework. After this activity is concluded, you may be called on to explain your evaluation of the option groups.

Role Playing the Four Options: Debate and Discussion

Objectives:

- Articulate the leading values that frame the debate on U.S. policy toward the Middle East.
- Explore, debate, and evaluate multiple perspectives on U.S. policy toward the Middle East.
- Sharpen rhetorical skills through debate and discussion.
- Cooperate with classmates in staging a persuasive presentation.

Handouts:

- "Evaluation Form" (page 23 of the teacher's guide) for the committee members.

In the Classroom:

1. Setting the Stage — Organize the room so that the four option groups face a row of desks reserved for the Committee on Foreign Relations. Distribute "Evaluation Form" to the committee members. Instruct members of the committee to fill out the first part of their "Evaluation Form" during the course of the period. The second part of the worksheet should be completed as homework.

2. Managing the Simulation — Explain that the simulation will begin with three-to-five minute presentations by the spokespersons for the option groups. Encourage the spokespersons to speak clearly and convincingly.

3. Guiding Discussion — Following the presentations, invite members of the Committee on Foreign Relations to ask cross-examination questions. Make sure that each committee member has an opportunity to ask at least one question. The questions should be evenly distributed among all four option groups. If time permits, encourage members of the option groups to challenge the positions of the competing groups. During cross-examination, allow any option group member to respond. (As an alternative approach, permit cross-examination following the presentation of each option.)

Homework:

Students should read each of the four options (pages 24-31 of the student text), then moving beyond these options they should fill out "Focusing Your Thoughts" (page 25 of the teacher's guide) and complete "Your Option Five" (page 26 of the teacher's guide)

Evaluation Form

Committee on Foreign Relations of the U.S. Senate

Part I

What was the most persuasive argument presented in favor of this option?	What was the most persuasive argument presented against this option?
Option 1	*Option 1*
Option 2	*Option 2*
Option 3	*Option 3*
Option 4	*Option 4*

Part II

Which group presented its option most effectively? Explain your answer.

Weighing Recommendations for U.S. Policy

Objectives:

Students will:

- Articulate guidelines for U.S. policy based on personally held values and historical understanding.
- Apply values and beliefs to hypothetical crises in the Middle East.
- Compare and contrast values and assumptions with classmates.

Required Reading:

Students should have read each of the four options (pages 24-31 of the student text) and completed "Focusing Your Thoughts" (page 25 of the teacher's guide) and "Your Option Five" (page 26 of the teacher's guide)

Handouts:

- "Coping with Crisis" (page 27 of the teacher's guide).

In the Classroom:

1. Analyzing Beliefs — Call on members of the Senate committee to share their evaluations of the option groups. Which arguments were most convincing? Which beliefs were most appealing? To what extent did the options address the concerns of Americans? Invite students to summarize their own options. To which interests and values did they attach the greatest importance? How would their policy recommendations change U.S. involvement in the Middle East? Ask students to identify the beliefs in "Focusing Your Thoughts" that they most strongly support.

2. Applying Student Options — Distribute "Coping with Crisis." Lead the class in reading the first hypothetical crisis. Call on the students who earlier presented their answers to "Your Option Five" to respond to the scenario from the perspective of their options. Invite other students to assess the responses. Are they consistent with the principles that the students articulated earlier? What are the potential threats and opportunities posed by the crisis? How would U.S. leaders, past and present, respond to the crisis? Encourage other students to challenge the views of their classmates. Review the two remaining hypothetical crises, inviting participation from the entire class.

Suggestions:

Allow students to work in pairs or small groups before sharing their responses to the hypothetical crises.

Extra Challenge:

As homework, instruct students to write a letter to a member of Congress or President Clinton expressing their views on U.S. policy toward the Middle East. The first part of the letter should summarize the ideas expressed in the first two questions of "Your Option Five." In the second part, students should offer their recommendations for U.S. policy toward pressing issues in the Middle East.

Encourage students to explore the local dimension of the debate on U.S. policy toward the Middle East. For example, students could be asked to contact organizations that have a deeply rooted interest in U.S. policy toward the Middle East. Business interests with connections to the Middle East, such as energy companies, are often active in the foreign policy arena. Ethnic organizations, particularly Jewish-American and Arab-American groups, also seek to make their voices heard. In addition, students, scholars, and immigrants from the Middle East may offer a source of insight into the region.

Focusing Your Thoughts

Instructions: You have had an opportunity to consider four options for U.S. policy toward the Middle East. Now it is your turn to look at each of the options from your own perspective. Try each one on for size. Think about how the options address your concerns and hopes. You will find that each has its own risks and trade-offs, advantages and disadvantages. After you complete this worksheet, you will be asked to develop your own option on U.S. policy toward Middle East.

Ranking the Options

Which of the options below do you prefer? Rank the options from "1" to "4," with "1" being your first choice.

___ **Option 1: Eye on the Prize**

___ **Option 2: Policing a Rough Neighborhood**

___ **Option 3: Promote Western Values**

___ **Option 4: Break Free of Entanglements**

Beliefs

Considering the statements below will help you answer the first three questions of "Your Option Five." Rate each of the statements below according to your personal beliefs:

1 = Strongly Support 3 = Oppose 5 = Undecided
2 = Support 4 = Strongly Oppose

___ All countries are capable of making progress toward democracy, freedom, and tolerance.

___ Meddling in the local affairs of other countries is counter-productive and dangerous.

___ Economic interests should be the driving force behind U.S. foreign policy.

___ In international relations, reliable friends and allies are America's most valuable asset.

___ The United States has a moral obligation to promote the political values and freedoms that we cherish around the world.

___ Political disputes and cultural differences should not prevent Americans from doing business with all countries.

___ The greatest threats facing the United States are all at home: budget deficits, mediocre schools, crime, and an inadequate health care system.

___ America's enemies can be contained only if we remain strong and vigilant.

Creating Your Own Option

Your next assignment is to create an option that reflects your own beliefs and opinions. You may borrow heavily from one option, or you may combine ideas from two or three options. Or you may take a new approach altogether. There are, of course, no perfect solutions. And there is no right or wrong answer. Rather, you should strive to craft an option that is logical and persuasive. Be careful of contradictions. For example, we should not launch an effort to promote democracy in the Middle East without expecting to upset our relations with the Arab kingdoms of the Persian Gulf.

Name:

Your Option Five

Instructions: In this exercise, you will offer your own recommendations for U.S. policy toward the Middle East. Your responses to "Focusing Your Thoughts" should help you identify the guiding principles of your proposal.

1. What values and interests should guide U.S. policy toward the Middle East?

2. Which issues in the Middle East deserve the most attention from the United States?

3. What specific policies should the United States pursue toward the Middle East? (Use the policy steps featured in the options as a guide.)

4. What are the two strongest arguments opposing your option?

   a.

   b.

5. What are the two strongest arguments supporting your option?

   a.

   b.

Coping with Crisis

Instructions: The modern Middle East is known for its unpredictability and explosiveness. In this exercise, you are asked to decide how the United States should respond to three hypothetical crises in the region. You should use your answers to the "Your Option Five" worksheet as a guide to developing your recommendations.

Crisis #1 — Saudi king under siege

Followers of an Islamist movement have launched a wave of labor strikes in the oil fields of Saudi Arabia. The strikes, which have won broad support among both local and foreign Muslim workers, have cut Saudi oil production in half over the past two weeks. Prices in the world market have already jumped $5 a barrel since the labor unrest began. The leaders of the Islamist movement have announced that they are seeking to overthrow the Saudi government. They charge that the Saudi royal family is corrupt and out-of-touch. They pledge to install a new leadership that better represents the will of the people. Reports indicate that the movement has received extensive support from Iran. Saudi Arabia's King Fahd has vowed to use his army to smash the challenge to his rule. So far, the Islamists have not threatened U.S. military forces in Saudi Arabia.

How should the United States respond?

Crisis #2 — Israeli-Palestinian peace process in danger

After a string of terrorist attacks within Israel, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has announced that he will end peace talks with the Palestinians. The attacks are part of a campaign by Palestinian hard-liners to stop the peace process and undermine the leadership of Yasir Arafat, head of the Palestinian Authority. Netanyahu contends that Arafat has failed to contain the extremists and can no longer be considered a reliable negotiating partner. The Israeli prime minister claims that several acts of terrorism have been carried out by members of the newly formed Palestinian security force. He has ordered the security force to give up its weapons. Israeli troops have reimposed direct control over a number of West Bank cities and are poised to move into the Gaza Strip. Arafat has condemned the terrorism and insists that his government is actively pursuing those responsible. At the same time, he has warned that Netanyahu's policies will ignite widespread violence.

How should the United States respond?

Crisis #3 — Revolt challenges Saddam Hussein

Iraqi ruler Saddam Hussein has ordered elite army units to put down a large-scale revolt led by Shi'ites in southern Iraq. The troop movements are a clear violation of UN sanctions, which prohibit Saddam from strengthening his military presence in the southern part of Iraq. Iraqi warplanes, however, have yet to violate the no-fly zone in southern Iraq. Iraqi opposition sources indicate that several top military leaders have refused to obey Saddam's orders to attack the rebels. The opposition sources claim that Saddam may not be able to hold on to power if the revolt spreads. Meanwhile, the Shi'ite religious leaders who instigated the uprising reportedly have close ties to their fellow Shi'ites within the Iranian government.

How should the United States respond?

Alternative Three-Day Lesson Plan

Day 1: See Day Two of the Suggested Five-Day Lesson Plan. (Students should have read Part II of the background reading and completed "Study Guide — Part II" before beginning the unit. To gain an introduction to the topic, students should also read the first page of the background reading.)

Day 2: Assign each student one of the four options, and allow a few minutes for students to familiarize themselves with the mindsets of the options. Call on students to evaluate the benefits and trade-offs of their assigned options. How do the options differ in their assumptions about the U.S. role in the world and the extent of American interests in the Middle East? How would U.S. policy toward the Middle East change if their assigned options were adopted? Moving beyond the options, ask students to imagine they have been called on to advise the president on U.S. strategy in the Middle East. What concerns would be at the top of their agenda? What values should guide the direction of U.S. policy?
Homework: Students should complete "Focusing Your Thoughts" and "Your Option Five."

Day 3: See Day Five of the Suggested Five-Day Lesson Plan.

Making Choices Work in Your Classroom

Like the art of cooking, cooperative group learning is a skill that is rarely perfected on the first attempt, either by teachers or students. Yet with careful preparation, guidance, and practice significant gains can be made quickly. No single recipe guarantees success with cooperative learning or the Choices approach in every classroom. That would be impossible, since each classroom differs in its organization and size, and its unique collection of personalities and needs. However, this section of the Teacher's Resource Book offers a variety of ingredients for teachers to use as they adapt Choices curricula to their classrooms. The suggested ingredients that follow have been drawn from educational research on student-centered instruction and, more important, from the experiences of teachers who have used Choices curricula successfully in their classrooms over the past six years. Educators who have questions about using Choices curricula in their classrooms are encouraged to contact the Choices Education Project in writing, or by calling (401) 863-3155. The Choices staff includes experienced classroom teachers who will be pleased to speak with you.

Designing Cooperative Learning Groups

Group Size: The key to successful cooperative group work is having a group assignment that is complex enough to require the participation of all group members. Planning the size and composition of working groups in advance is crucial to the successful use of Choices curricula. Research indicates that the ideal size for a cooperative learning group is four or five students. This is certainly the ideal size for group assignments in Choices units. When using Choices units in larger classes, the size of option (or, in the case of this unit, Future) groups may be expanded to six or seven students. However, it is important to keep in mind that whenever the number of students in a group is increased, the number of roles and expected outcomes must also be expanded.

Group Composition: A strength of cooperative learning is that it creates opportunities for students to work together in new combinations on challenging tasks. Cooperative learning not only requires the academic skills of reading, writing, and critical thinking, but the interpersonal skills of communication, negotiation, and problem-solving. In most cases, this style of instruction and learning is most effective when students are assigned to groups by the teacher rather than being allowed to work with their friends. While random group selection can be effective, in most classes successful group composition requires that the teacher consider the personalities, strengths, and needs of the students.

Groups comprised of students with diverse strengths, talents, and needs are ideal. For example, artistic students might be assigned to different groups to share their talents and perspectives, while less verbal students could be placed in groups with more outgoing students to help draw them into the lesson. Whenever possible, teachers should try to prevent one student from dominating a group. Explaining the instructions, roles, and ground rules for cooperative learning (see below) helps prevent this. Teachers may choose to group aggressive students with each other, leaving room in other groups for less assertive students to emerge as leaders. Finally, even though the negotiation of roles among the students in a group can be a valuable part of the cooperative learning experience, teachers might choose to assign certain roles, such as group spokesperson, in order to encourage leadership from more reticent students and to keep more aggressive students from dominating.

Students may initially complain about being assigned to groups that do not include their closest friends. We have found that, at the conclusion of the assignment, they will usually express satisfaction with their assigned partners, recognize that they got more accomplished, and sometimes even acknowledge the start of new friendships. The additional time involved in planning group size and composition will pay off when students are actively engaged, debating, and thinking critically.

Preparing Students for Cooperative Learning

Provide Clear Written Instructions: As with any assignment, students benefit from instructions and guidelines that clearly outline expectations and how they will be accomplished. These should be given to students in writing and reviewed with the class. Afterwards, as questions arise within groups, students should refer to the written instructions and attempt to answer each other's questions before asking for the teacher's assistance.

Establish Ground Rules: Especially when cooperative learning is a new experience, students benefit from the establishment of ground rules that are explained before groups are formed. Ground rules must be kept simple, and should be designed to keep students involved and on task. Posting these rules in a prominent place in the classroom can be very effective. An example of simple but effective ground rules for the cooperative group assignments could be:

Everybody has a role (or a job)
Everybody participates
Nobody dominates
Nobody interrupts

These rules can be enforced by appointing one student to serve as the group manager. The teacher can make it clear that one of the group manager's responsibilities is to enforce the ground rules as the group explores its assigned option and prepares its presentation. The group manager might also be required to make sure that members of the group stay on task and attempt to solve problems before asking for the teacher's assistance. Ground rules that are clear and used consistently can, over time, become an integral component of the classroom, facilitating learning and keeping students on task.

Managing the Choices Simulation

Recognize Time Limitations: At the heart of the Choices approach is the role-play simulation in which students advocate different options, question each other, and debate. Just as thoughtful preparation is necessary to set the stage for cooperative group learning, careful planning for the presentations and debate can increase the effectiveness of the simulation. Time is the essential ingredient to keep in mind. A minimum of 45 to 50 minutes is necessary for the presentations and debate. Hence, if only one class period is available, student groups must be ready as soon as class begins. Teachers who have been able to schedule a double period or extend the length of class to one hour report that the extra time is beneficial. When necessary, the role-play simulation can be run over two days, but this disrupts the momentum of the debate. The best strategy for managing the role-play is to establish and enforce strict time limits, such as five minutes for each option presentation, ten minutes for questions and challenges, and the final five minutes of class for wrapping up the debate. It is crucial to make students aware of strict time limits as they prepare their presentations.

Highlight the Importance of Values: During the debate and debriefing, it is important to highlight the role of values in the options. Students should be instructed to identify the core values and priorities underlying the different options.

Moving Beyond the Options

As a culminating activity of a Choices unit, students are expected to articulate their own views of the issue under consideration. An effective way to move beyond the options debate to creating individual options is to have students consider which values in the options framework they hold most dear. Typically, students will hold several of these values simultaneously and will need to prioritize them to reach a considered judgment about the issue at hand. These values should be reflected in their own options and should shape the goals and policies they advocate.

Adjusting for Large and Small Classes

Choices units are designed for an average class of twenty-five students. In larger classes, additional roles, such as those of newspaper reporter or member of a special interest group, can be assigned to increase student participation in the simulation. With larger option groups, additional tasks might be to create a poster, political cartoon, or public service announcement that represents the viewpoint of an option. In smaller classes, the teacher can serve as the moderator of the debate, and administrators, parents, or faculty can be invited to play the roles of congressional leaders. Another alternative is to combine two small classes.

Applying Choices to Ability-Grouped Classes

Choices curricula are developed with the majority of high school students in mind. Choices units are not designed solely for students in honors or advanced placement programs. Nor are they designed specifically for students in remedial classes. However, the units are designed to be flexible enough for high school teachers to adapt for *any* classroom, and they have been used successfully in all kinds of classes. The Choices staff places confidence in the ability of teachers to decide which units are best suited for the courses and students they teach. The following suggestions may assist teachers of higher- and lower-ability classes in adapting Choices curricula to meet the needs of their students.

Lower-Ability Classes: It would be a mistake to believe that the Choices approach is too difficult for students in lower-ability classes. Teachers report that, with certain adaptations, Choices units can motivate higher levels of student participation, thinking, and confidence in lower-ability classes. Feedback from classroom teachers indicates that the following strategies lead to success with Choices in these classes:

- Maintain high expectations for student learning and thinking.
- Classes of all abilities do a better job with Choices the second or third time the approach is used. Skills in collaboration, communication, and critical thinking improve with practice.
- Some units are easier than others because the necessary background is particularly accessible. Use one of these first to give the students some experience with the approach.
- To make background readings more manageable, some teachers have students read aloud in class, stopping to discuss or clarify key points. Other teachers substitute shorter readings from the textbook or another source as background reading.
- Key concepts from the background can be explained in a mini-lecture format.
- Students can review and keep track of the important terms in a unit by creating their own glossary for reference throughout the unit.
- An extra day for review of the background, for group preparation, or for the development of individual options can be very worthwhile.

Higher-Ability Classes: Choices units have much to offer students in higher-ability and advanced placement classes. Students are challenged to understand the internal logic of different arguments and to extrapolate from these while playing the role of advocate. Two-week Choices units are especially rich in historical background, and they highlight the complex relationships among nations through many eras. Choices units on historical topics typically include a wealth of primary source documents for students to read and analyze. These documents can help to prepare students in advanced placement classes for the "Document Based Questions" included on advanced placement examinations. Extra challenge assignments are included in many lesson plans, and every Choices unit includes suggestions for additional reading and research.

Assessing Student Achievement

Grading Group Assignments: Research suggests that it is counterproductive to give students individual grades on cooperative group assignments. A significant part of the assignment given to the group is to cooperate in achieving a common goal, as opposed to looking out for individual interests. Telling students in advance that the group will receive one grade often motivates group members to hold each other accountable. This can foster group cohesion and lead to better group results. It may be useful to note that in addition to the cooperative group assignments, students complete individual assignments as well in every Choices unit.

Requiring Self-Evaluation: Having students complete self-evaluations is an extremely effective way to make them think about their own learning. Self-evaluations can take many forms and are useful in a variety of circumstances. They are particularly helpful in getting students to think constructively about group collaboration. In developing a self-evaluation tool for students, teachers need to pose clear and direct questions to students. A sample Group Project Self-Evaluation is included on the following page. Each student should complete his/her own evaluation as part of the unit. Two key benefits of student self-evaluation are that it involves students in the assessment process, and that it provides teachers with valuable insights into the contributions of individual students and the dynamics of different groups. These insights can help teachers to organize groups for future cooperative assignments.

Evaluating Student Options: The most important outcomes of a Choices unit are the original options developed and articulated by each student. These will differ significantly from one another, as students identify different values and priorities that shape their viewpoints. These options cannot be graded as right or wrong, but should be evaluated on clarity of expression, logic, and thoroughness. Did the student provide reasons for his/her viewpoint along with supporting evidence? Were the values clear and consistent throughout the option? Did the student identify the risks involved? Did the student present his/her option in a convincing manner?

Testing: In a formal evaluation of the Choices approach, it was demonstrated that students using Choices learned the factual information presented as well as or better than students who were taught in a more traditional lecture-discussion format. However, the larger benefits of the Choices approach were evident when students using Choices demonstrated significantly higher ability to think critically, analyze multiple perspectives, and articulate original viewpoints, compared to students who did not use this approach. Teachers should hold students accountable for learning historical information, concepts, and current events presented in Choices units. However, a simple multiple-choice examination will not allow students to demonstrate the critical thinking and communication skills developed through the Choices unit. If teachers choose to test students, they may wish to explore new models of test design that require students to do more than recognize correct answers. Tests should not replace the development of student options.

For Further Reading: Cohen, Elizabeth G. *Designing Groupwork: Strategies for the Heterogeneous Classroom* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1986).

Group Project Self-Evaluation

1. What did you contribute to this project?

2. List the names of your partners and briefly comment on each person's contributions.

3. What things went well within your group?

4. What problems did you encounter? How did you attempt to resolve these problems?

5. If you had this assignment to do over again, with the same partners, what would you do differently?

6. Overall, what grade do you think your group deserves on this assignment? Explain your response.

Publications List

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